
Capitalism, Overview

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Introduction

Capitalism is an essential topic for psychologists to study. The reason is that capitalism is the dominant cultural system in the world – and has been for the past four centuries – and culture is the basis of psychology. To ignore capitalism is to overlook important details of culture which are involved in psychological phenomena. Unfortunately, capitalism is virtually never mentioned by psychologists, even those who profess an interest in culture and psychology (Ratner, 2012). This chapter attempts to correct this error.

Definition

The fullest and deepest and most critical characterization of capitalism (that is relevant to critical psychology) was articulated by Marx (1973). He demonstrated that for all of capitalism's achievements – which Marx did respect – capitalism is essentially exploitive. Capitalism produces exploitation while denying it, obfuscating it, rationalizing it, legitimizing it, and mystifying it as freedom, agency, democracy,

and fulfillment. Because the exploitive character of capitalism is rarely analyzed, this chapter explores it in economic and psychological terms.

Keywords

Political economy; exploitation; cooperation; consumerism; commodification; consumer psychology; World system; liberalism

Capitalist Exploitation

Foster and McChesney (2012) document the exploitive nature of capitalism in Chinese sweatshops. Low wages for Chinese workers (4 % of American wages) enable Apple computer, for example, to reduce labor costs to only 3.6 % of total manufacturing costs of iPhones. This generates a 64 % profit margin on manufacturing costs. In some Chinese sweatshops that produce Microsoft products, workers are at the factory 83 h per week, and work on the production line 68 h. Workshops are 34 m by 34 m square and contain 1,000 workers who are paid 52 cents per hour take-home pay. In other Chinese factories, workers work on computer keyboards for 7.2 s each, 500 per hour. A worker is given 1.1 s to snap each separate key into place repeating the operation 3,250 times every hour, 35,750 times a day! Employees work 12 h shifts, 7 days a week, with 2 days off a month.

The Pou Yuen Plant F in Dongguan (owned by a Taiwanese group) produces goods for the

German company PUMA. The base wage in 2004 was 31 cents per hour for 14–16 h shifts. The total cost of labor to make a pair of PUMA sneakers came to just \$1.16. The workers' wages amounted to just 1.66 % of the sneakers' \$70 retail price. It takes 3 h to make a pair of sneakers. PUMA's gross manufacturing profit on a pair of \$70 sneakers is \$34.09. PUMA's hourly profit on manufacturing each pair of sneakers is more than 28 times greater than the wages workers received to make the sneaker. PUMA makes an annual profit of \$38,188 per production worker in China. When profit is measured against all corporate expenditures, not simply the manufacturing process in factories, PUMA's profit is \$7.42 per sneaker, which is 6.4 times (640 %) more than the workers are paid to make the sneaker. The workers pay for their entire year's salary in 5 days' work! All the rest of their yearly production goes to profit.

Unequal class structure does not just happen because some people work harder than others. Class structure is formed because some people exploit others – that is, they forcibly take wealth from them (Taibbi, 2011). One clear example is the way in which capitalists expropriate productivity gains from the workers who produced them.

From 1972 to 2009 “usable” productivity – that part of productivity growth that is available for raising wages and living standards – increased by 55.5 %, while real hourly pay fell by almost 10 %. This opened a gap of 44.4 % between compensation and usable productivity since 1972. Had compensation matched usable productivity growth, i.e., if workers had been paid the value of their annual productivity increases (as they essentially were prior to the early 1970s), the 84 million non-supervisory and production workers in 2009 would have received roughly \$1.91 trillion more in wages and benefits. They would have received \$35.98 per hour in 2009 instead of the \$23.14 they actually received. In other words, 13.5 % of GDP in 2009 was transferred from workers to capitalists and managers (Cypher, 2011).

Capitalists additionally exploited workers by needlessly firing them during the economic retrenchment and replacing them with technology

and higher productivity of the remaining employees. In the Great recession, between late 2007 and the end of 2009, output fell 4.5 % but the numbers of workers fell by 8.3 %. Companies displaced more workers than they needed to, in contrast to the 1970s when they displaced fewer than they needed to. (During the recession of the 1970s, the output of goods and services in the USA fell by 5 % and employment fell by 2.5 %. Companies retained workers whom they did not need just to protect their jobs). Companies today are more ruthless with regard to jobs and workers than before (Wall Street Journal, July 27, 2011, p. B1).

This objective exploitation leads to subjective unhappiness of workers: “More than three fourths of departing employees say they wouldn't recommend their employer to others the worst percentage in at least five years. . . In 2008, just as the recession began, only 42 % of employees said they wouldn't recommend their employer” (Wall Street Journal, Aug. 8, 2011, p. B8). Antipathy towards employers doubled in three years (see Hommerich, 2012 for data on Japan linking rising subjective feelings of vulnerability to objective measures of social inequality and insecurity).

Capitalist exploitation is a pincer movement where capitalists increase profit through reducing wages, and they reap high interest payments on loans that people are forced to obtain because capitalists have reduced their wages and benefits and have curtailed public spending through neo-liberal policies (Soederberg, 2013). “The Class of 2011 will graduate this spring from America's colleges and universities with a dubious distinction: the most indebted ever. \$22,900: Average student debt of newly minted college graduates. That's 8 % more than last year and, in inflation-adjusted terms, 47 % more than a decade ago. The Collegiate Employment Research Institute estimates that the average salary for holders of new bachelor degrees will be \$36,866 this year, down 25 % from \$46,500 in 2009” (Whitehouse, 2011).

Inequality

Not only is inequality increasing in the USA between the capitalist class and the working

class, it is also increasing within the capitalist class. It is increasingly concentrated in the very elite of that class. In 2007, the five best-paid hedge-fund managers earned more than all of the CEOs of the Fortune 500 corporations combined. The income of just the top three hedge-fund managers (James Simon, John Paulson, and George Soros) was a combined \$9 billion!

Exploitation and Stagnation: A Double Helix of Capitalism

Marx explained that capitalist exploitation is not only unjust and immoral, it is economically unsustainable as well. Morality thus has a political-economic dimension. Capitalist exploitation deprives workers of the financial means to consume what they produce; this results in overproduction of goods and stagnation in production and profitability. Stagnation forces capitalists to desperate, speculative, unsustainable measures to generate profit. These measures lead to further exploitation and economic crisis, as in the Great Recession of 2008 (the magazine *Monthly Review* develops this point exceptionally well). This is an intractable problem (an intractable dynamic or “law”) of capitalism that dooms the system to collapse at some point – just as other grand social systems have collapsed.

American capitalism has been in a sustained decline since the 1970s (Ratner, 2012, pp. 294–302). One indicator is that the recovery from the current recession is weaker than the recoveries from recessions ending in 1975, 1982, 1991, and 2001, as measured by consumer credit, disposable personal income, personal consumption, and the unemployment rate. For example, adjusted for inflation, retail sales at the end of 2012 were only 13 % higher than when the recession officially ended in 2009; whereas sales increased 18.5 % in the aftermath of the previous four recessions (*Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 13, 2012, p. C1).

A recent study (“Majority of Jobs Added in the Recovery Pay Low Wages, Study Finds,” *New York Times*, Aug. 31, 2012, p. B1) documents the dramatic deterioration in the American capitalist political economy. While a majority of jobs lost during the downturn were in the middle range of

wages, a majority (58 %) of those added during the recovery have been low paying, according to a new report (http://www.nelp.org/index.php/content/content_about_us/tracking_the_recovery_after_the_great_recession) from the National Employment Law Project. During the recovery, only low-wage jobs increased more than they lost during the recession. Mid-wage jobs declined by four million from 2008 to 2010 and regained less than one million from 2012 to 2012; high-wage jobs declined by 1.1 million and have recovered 0.8 million; and low-wage jobs declined 1.2 million but increased by two million from 2010 to 2012. The occupations with the fastest growth were retail sales (at a median wage of \$10.97 an hour) and food preparation workers (\$9.04 an hour).

This report has important implications for the debate over educational reform. The report shows that the capitalist political economy is responsible for a general deterioration of high- and mid-level occupational skills. This filters down into educational psychology where it reduces students’ educational aspirations. The reduced economic incentive for educational achievement is directly infused into schooling by neoliberal educational reforms that restructure pedagogy along to be congruent with neoliberal political-economic interests. This is described in the chapter in the *Encyclopedia on macrocultural psychology*. Education will never improve as long as the economy has no use for it, and neoliberals are limiting it. (Another consequence of neoliberal educational reform is to narrow education so that students will not develop critical, analytical, logical, and cognitive skills and historical thinking that would enable them to comprehend the full scale and the full reasons for the deteriorating capitalist political economy and the entire society. Comprehending this would lead to massive resentment and rebellion. Neoliberal educational reform is thus really an assertion of social control over potentially revolutionary resistance to the status quo). Blaming education, bad teachers, and bad pedagogy for the lack of high-skilled workers is a specious distortion of the real reasons.

Privatizing the Public

Capitalist businesses dominate public institutions. Corporate corruption of the political process is well known (Wolin, 2008). Lesser known is the fact that corporations have infiltrated police departments and make them do their bidding.

The New York City Police Department has set up a “Paid Detail Unit” of cops that corporations pay for – rent – to enforce their own interests. They do so disguised as NYPD, wearing NYPD uniforms and carrying weapons and using the training that are all provided by the taxpayer. The Paid Detail typically reports directly to a member of the internal security for the corporation. They follow the rules given to them by the corporation. They work in their NYPD uniforms so the public has no way to know they are not being paid by the NYPD, are not under the jurisdiction of the NYPD, and are essentially private thugs. Yet they use their authority as “off-duty” police to make arrests, as any off-duty cop can – in the interest of their corporate bosses, not public safety. This form of privatizing public services to combat the public interest in whose name the work is done is more clandestine than privatizing education where at least people know that teachers are not public employees or public servants, but are private employees of private interests. J.P. Morgan bank and the New York Stock Exchange recently paid \$4 million to the New York City Police Department to quell civil protests against Wall Street and establishment policies. These privatized city cops conducted the mass arrests and beatings of Occupy Wall St. protestors (Martens, 2011).

The National Police State

Exploitation and immerisation must be enforced and defended against resistance by the victims. (This, of course, is reframed as “security” or protection.) Consequently, the State has become a police state that spies on, detains, brutalizes, prevents, and prosecutes potential resisters. Today, 64 % of American federal employees are in the military or work for the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security.

The national police state extends to the international police state. All modern capitalist countries have conquered foreign nations through military and financial means, including funding and training of death squads from Chile to Indonesia. One of the worst of these interventions is the little-known fact that American capitalists actively supported Hitler (Sutton, 2010).

Capitalism is a World System

Capitalism is a coherent, unified, administered domestic system and international system. The capitalist class works in a concerted fashion to impose capitalist practices on every social sector. Today, they are actively at work to extend capitalist hegemony to the fields of education, medicine, pensions, health insurance, election rules, legislative procedures, the military, the judiciary, regulatory agencies, the media, news, scientific research, athletics, tax codes, and trade. The ten largest American financial institutions control 60 % of domestic financial assets. Globally, the ten largest financial institutions control 70 % of global financial assets (Foster, 2010, p. 9).

Transnational capitalist corporations form corporate–government institutions that subsume national governments within corporate rules. Corporations are thus dominating national governments in a unified world capitalist system (Carroll, 2012). The World Trade Organization (WTO) decreed in June 2012 that basic consumer information such as country-of-origin labels on meat is “unfair trade barriers” to multinational corporate profits. The WTO has proclaimed that US “dolphin-safe” tuna labels and a US ban on clove-, candy-, and cola-flavored cigarettes both violate WTO trade rules. The recent WTO rulings are not merely advisory. The United States will have to abandon some hard-won labeling rules or pay to maintain them in the form of fines or sanctions.

The Obama administration has continued negotiations on a secret Bush administration initiative called the “Trans-Pacific Partnership.” It limits a signatory’s right to regulate land use, food safety, natural resources, energy, health care, financial services, and human rights. Special private courts would adjudicate compliance.

These courts would consist of three attorneys from corporations acting as judges. These corporate attorneys would decide whether particular governments were in compliance with TPP stipulations (see Marazzi, 2011 for an excellent discussion of capitalism's recent trends).

Critical Debates

In contrast to the description of capitalism as fundamentally a coherent, exploitive system, defenders of capitalism describe it as segmented, efficient, rational, free, productive, innovative, and benefitting community through the accumulation of egotistical choices. Problems associated with capitalism are construed as anomalies, mistakes, or accidents. Conservatives adopt this viewpoint wholesale. Liberals adopt it with minor reservations and adjustments. Liberals recognize excessive greed that plagues unfettered capitalism, but they believe that a few governmental regulations will contain these and allow the advantages of the market to prevail. Liberals never identify exploitation as an essential element of capitalism. They never call for the transformation of the capitalist system or the replacement of capitalist ruling class by a cooperative, democratic political economy.

For example, Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman (2012, p. 12), who describes himself as a “free market liberal” economist, opines that “The truth is the recovery [from the recession that began in 2008 and has persisted through 2012] would be almost ridiculously easy to achieve: all we need is to reverse the austerity policies of the past couple of years and temporarily boost spending... With a boost in spending, we could be back to more or less full employment faster than anyone imagines... Now is the time for the government to spend more until the private sector is ready to carry the economy forward again... Measures I have advocated would mainly try to boost the economy rather than try to transform it.”

This economic liberalism insists that the private capitalist economy is basically sound and it just needs some government priming to get it back on track that a few greedy capitalists have

derailed. Krugman opposes transforming the political economy, and this includes rejecting a cooperative transformation.

Krugman exemplifies the liberal position as loyal opposition to capitalism. It presses for humanitarian changes within the system. This is utopian. The American economy has been stagnating since the 1970s, 40 years before the current crisis. The private economy has been plunging capitalism into a spiral of permanent decline. GDP growth was 4.5 % in the 1960s; 3 % in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s; and 1.5 % from 2000 to 2011. The rate of growth in this last period was 63 % below that of the 1960s. From 2007 to 2012, the rate of growth was 0.6 %, despite the infusion of \$14 trillion in government stimulus. Growth declined from 4.5 % in 1995 to 0.6 % in 2012, despite massive tax cuts for the rich in 2003. Wages now are at 1970s levels; wages for college graduates have declined 15 % in the past 10 years. The last several recessions have produced “recoveries” in GDP and profits without any job increases (jobless recoveries). In addition, jobs have become increasingly skewed toward poorly paid, low-skill occupations. Furthermore, the industrial production index has steadily declined from 10 % in 1955 to 2 % in 2010 (an 80 % decline). Manufacturing has been replaced by financialization as the major driver of GDP. Yet financialization does not produce anything and is therefore incapable of carrying the economy forward. Quite the opposite, the rise of financialization to about 70 % of the economy has driven it to one crisis after another and to a steadily declining growth in GDP (Foster & McChesney, 2012, pp. 4, 15; Foster, 2010; New York Times, Sept. 16, 2012, p. SR4).

To proclaim that the private economy will easily return to “normal” and carry us “forward” ignores this structural, continuous, intractable decline in the private economy that is due to the fundamental problem of overproduction that is rooted in the way that capitalism generates wealth by exploiting its work force. Krugman's position is close to Milton Friedman's apologetics for capitalism as the best, and only, political economy and in no need of fundamental, structural transformation, i.e., toward cooperatives.

Liberal achievements never challenge the essence of capitalism. Indeed, they are always won by accommodating the capitalist ruling class. A few examples demonstrate this:

Roosevelt was quite adept at bargaining with corporations. In his first 100 days, to attract corporate support for the National Industrial Recovery Act, he won collective bargaining, minimum wages and maximum hours in exchange for a temporary suspension of antitrust law, so businesses could fix prices. To establish the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1934, he made concessions to Wall Street that scrapped statutory requirements in favor of regulatory flexibility. The following year, to allow the Federal Reserve to better conduct monetary policy, he gave bankers representation on the policy committee.

Lyndon Johnson also found little value in warring with corporations. He won a Keynesian tax cut in early 1964, defeating budget-conscious conservatives, thanks to a broad coalition that included corporations. He attracted business support to back his first antipoverty bill by junking plans to promote family farming and push businesses to hire long-term unemployed people. He created the Transportation Department, in 1966, only after exempting resistant shipping interests from its jurisdiction. He incited a new era of environmental protection, increasing federal responsibility for cleaning air and water, while defusing corporate opposition by trading away federal pollution standards.

Recently released e-mail exchanges between the Obama White House and the pharmaceutical lobby, which detail a path of compromises that won the drug industry's support for the Affordable Care Act, certainly look more like "business as usual" than "change." The e-mails include a White House promise of a "direct line of communication" to lobbyists, along with a suggestion to "stay quiet" about an agreement that buried a proposal for cheap drug imports. [The Act forces people, and subsidizes them, to buy insurance from private companies. This individual mandate was a conservative idea hatched by the right-wing Heritage Foundation – known as the Heritage Consumer Choice Health Plan – promoted in the 1990s by the likes of Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole; first enacted by Mitt Romney as governor of Massachusetts; and which benefits private insurance companies and the for-profit hospitals by adding tens of millions of additional customers and the pharmaceutical industry by banning Medicare from using its market power to negotiate lower drug prices. The Act was largely written by health insurance industry lobbyists].

Health care was not an anomaly for Mr. Obama. His original stimulus package never faced well-financed conservative opposition in part because

the United States Chamber of Commerce backed the business tax cuts in the package. We got a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau after Mr. Obama put Wall Street at ease by resisting proposals to cap the size of banks. New standards lifting average fuel-efficiency goals were set once the White House accepted the automakers' demand for a review in 2021 and flexibility regarding light trucks. The food safety bill empowered the Food and Drug Administration to recall tainted items but won industry support by dropping a ban on bisphenol A, or BPA, a chemical used in food and beverage containers ("How Liberals Win," New York Times, July 1, 2012, p. SR8).

Obama's liberal endorsement of the capitalist status quo is also demonstrated in the fact that he has continued all of Bush's counterterrorism policies, as well as neoliberal educational policies (Williams, 2012).

Liberalism thus does not understand the essential problems of capitalism, nor can it solve them.

International Relevance

A thorough understanding of capitalism is vital for the world's people for whom capitalism is the dominant world system. The more they understand the structure, principles, and dynamics of capitalism, the more they will understand the way it organizes their lives. Understanding the capitalist world system is also crucial for setting forth a direction of social reform that specifically counters capitalism's exploitive features and utilizes its advancing features. Understanding capitalism as a global system also unifies multitudes of people around the world in a common set of problems that demand a common solution. People thus have an objective common interest in cooperating toward a common alternative to capitalism – as the chapter on emancipation in this Encyclopedia explains. If people realized this in their subjective understanding, they would halt the internecine divisions and conflicts that are decimating their cultures.

Practical Relevance

Because this chapter appears in an Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology, it is appropriate to discuss

the way that capitalism organizes psychological phenomena. This will not only explain concrete psychology, it will also explain how capitalism maintains itself through subjectivity. This reciprocal relation between cultural factors and psychology/subjectivity/consciousness is central to understanding and maintaining each.

Capitalism, Marketing, and Engineering the Bourgeois Self

Engineering desires, needs, and tastes through marketing are necessary ways to overcome the problem of economic stagnation, described earlier. Because workers cannot afford to purchase their products, they must be induced to buy beyond their means. Extending credit is one aid – American household debt is 113 % of after tax income as of June 2012. Creating intense, insatiable, uncontrollable desire is another inducement to consume beyond what wages afford and should limit for the rational consumer. Marketers need to create an entire irrational psychology that dispenses with rational decisions based upon wages. This is what consumerism is all about. Commodifying the self to identify one's success and happiness with products is a key element of this psychology. Another mechanism for inducing consumption is to promote “junk” products that provide intense, superficial stimulation that quickly vanishes and needs to be replenished by new products. Junk food, and the continuous snacking it causes, is an obvious example. Junk products generate more purchases than wholesome products which generate satiety and enduring satisfaction (Ratner, 2012, pp. 335–375).

Zwick explores the ways that consumer capitalism engineers consumer psychology. He explains the erosion of community that consumer capitalism promotes in the area of condo housing:

Certainly, the dream of a community that protects against loneliness, ensures meaningful personal encounters, and holds the promises of authentic and lasting social relations may appeal to many potential condo buyers. Yet, the frailty of each member's social, professional, and personal relationships means that for most “members,” community constitutes hardly more than a fragile network of personal contacts.

More importantly, given the increasing unpredictability of professional and personal biographies in liquid modernity, the upwardly mobile condo dweller cannot well afford belonging to a community made up of lasting, committed relationships to a group, a person, or a place. Social responsibilities and emotional dependencies are considered a liability for mobility, a drag on personal freedom, and a potential barrier to a life of enterprise. Hence, marketers must be careful not to present an unfashionable, traditional version of community when what their particular clientele is seeking is a deliberately patched-together set of active, consumerist, pleasant, and affluent individuals “just like them” – what Dean calls “enterprise community” – that allows for safe, enjoyable, and cooperative exchanges while guaranteeing a non-committal and always temporary association with other characteristic of neoliberal individualism.

Zwick explains that consumer capitalism insidiously promotes the autonomous self and personal agency in fraudulent ways that actually work in the service of consumerism.

A second biopolitical strategy of condo marketing pursues what we term enterprising consumption. It aims at stirring the desire of the aspiring middle-class condo population to maintain a mode of existence centered on the “endless, self-creative project of making yourself and your life a work of art.” The marketer asks the condo buyer to consider the dwelling together with the large and always-changing universe of consumption opportunities as a resource for the work of continuous self-realization and self-production. Enterprising consumption is, hence, presented as a form of self-government that pushes the buyer of the condo or loft to cultivate him/herself as “human capital” employed toward the maximization of her own creative potential and investment. However, this pursuit of lifestyling as a practice of continuous self-formation is not to be viewed by the consuming subject as an end in itself. Rather, enterprising consumption is to be undertaken as part of a straightforward economic calculus where the right kind of local consumption is positioned as a key practice in the transformation of the neighborhood and thus of economic value creation; for example, attracting and supporting a more high-end retail environment in turn increases the neighborhood's desirability more generally, thus ensuring a rise in value of the real estate investment. “Put differently, by urging the buyer of a condo or loft to consider every act of consumption as a matter of entrepreneurial judgment – as a cost–benefit calculation that can ultimately be tied back to the value of the acquired real

estate – condo marketers hand the responsibility of future value creation (through the transformation of the immediate and extended vicinity of the condo development) over to the autonomous choices of each individual owner” (Zwick & Ozalp, 2011, pp. 239–240).

Biopolitical marketing is a strategy of subjectivation by encouraging consumers to cultivate themselves as autonomous and self-interested individuals who regard their performance of a specific consumerist lifestyle, based on a particular set of economic, cultural, and social resources, as a form of investment, which can generate a return. It is a strategy of subjectification in that it seeks to govern a population of consumers, or a community of buyers, as a form of “human capital” whose effects produced at the level of everyday life are pitched against other forms of human capital, thus framing all forms of life in economic value and making every individual – including, as in the case of condo marketing, populations not directly targeted by biopolitical marketing – morally responsible for navigating the social realm using rational choice and cost–benefit calculation to the express exclusion of all other values and interests (ibid., 245–246; Zwick, Bonsu, Darmody, 2008).

Biopolitical marketing wants to govern consumer conduct as a technology of the self, not through force and coercion but through “autonomous” processes by which the self constructs and modifies him/herself in ways desired by the marketer. Biopolitical marketing relies on a form of power that is primarily about the guidance of consumer behavior, i.e., governing the forms of self-government, structuring and shaping the field of possible action of subjects (p. 247).

The biopolitical turn in marketing is an attempt to erect a specific space of power that produces self-producing and self-governing subjects and to manage and channel the processes of self-production and self-governance into profitable avenues. As a consequence, biopolitical marketing turns conventional marketing on its head by positing what would be considered a desirable outcome of a purchase such as community, social communication, and lifestyle as an input for a new mode of surplus value production (p. 249).

This research is a powerful critique of agency, for it demonstrates how agency has been made to serve capitalism rather than the reverse. Capitalism encourages an active, agentic, enterprising consumer who creates a lifestyle out of products and is constantly searching for new ways to do this. This active self, of course, generates more sales and profits. This cultural exploitation of

agency cannot be admitted by the ideology of individual choice, rationality, and democracy. So biopolitical marketing denies its actions and pretends that it is simply responding to autonomous, creative, self-expressive, authentic, agentic individuals.

It is alarming that many cultural psychologists are fooled by this rational consumer rhetoric: they claim that individuals are autonomous, creative, agentic beings who use culture for their own purposes (Ratner, 2012, Chap. 6).

Dunn (2008) emphasizes the “systematic commodification of need and want.” We do not simply want commodities to use; more insidiously, our psychology has become commodified; it has been infused with the commodity form of capitalism. Psychological phenomena are defined in terms of commodities that are bought and sold. Commodities make us feel happy or sad and successful or unsuccessful; they determine what we need and want. Commodities are presented in ways that tell us that we need and desire them. They are not presented neutrally for us to consider. They are laden, or saturated, with desire; they call for us to use them; this is why we “must” have them. The self does not stand apart from commodities, independently deciding which of them it wants to serve its own needs. Commodities are the tail that wags the dog. We derive our status from the objects we possess; objects define us more than we define them. This is why we “must” have them. Objects are not bestowed upon us to reflect or express our capacities. Rather, objects define us: we are popular because of our objects. We buy our popularity through them.

The proliferation of commodities generates proliferating needs, wants, and emotions; it also generates a high intensity level of need and an insatiable level of need – even for such traditionally commonplace objects like sneakers, trash cans, and telephones. Commodities determine our level and duration of satisfaction (temporary), impatience and anticipation (of new products), the intensity of our need and happiness, and our attention span. Commodification of need and want refers to the fact that features of the commodity market organize the manner in

which we need and want, not merely the object of our want (Ratner, 2012, pp. 335–375).

Within “the cultural logic of late capitalism,” David Howes (2005) has suggested hyperesthesia or “the sensual logic of late capitalism” to designate how commoditized senses and sensual codes pervade the mechanisms of consumption, such as media, entertainment, advertising, retail architecture, and fashion. Howes correctly highlights the role of the senses as a driving force within the contemporary capitalist economy of consumption. As a term and concept, hyperesthesia also implies a neurological condition precipitated by the logics and architectures of consumption. As a medical condition, hyperesthesia involves an abnormal increase in sensitivity to stimuli of the senses.

Hochschild (2012) documents the commodification of psychological phenomena. She reveals ways in which online dating commodifies the manner in which people portray themselves and respond to each other. Looking for love is treated as looking for a job. Internet self-presentations are short and must attract a viewer’s attention in 3 s. Individuals brand themselves and seek a return on their investment in the quantitative form of responses. Presenters are often rated with a number. This depersonalizes them. Several subjects who hooked up on dates reported the experience of wanting to find more “6 s” to compare. This commodification of people into quantities led to lack of commitment since there is always “another six out there.” Ironically, Hochschild reports that online dating was most successful when participants minimized the commoditization features that they had paid to adopt. Failures occurred when participants adopted commoditization too seriously.

Internet dating coaches similarly truncate their psychology by commodifying it. Coaches commonly devise different packages or levels of assistance. They carefully gauge their assistance, attention, and concern to how much the customer pays for. This replaces genuine concern for helping the customer find satisfaction.

Another of Hochschild’s subjects applied business logic to her family behavior. She

believed in outsourcing whatever can be done better and cheaper, and she applied this to herself: “I don’t invest my identity in the stuff I hand off. ‘m not a fantastic cook so it’s no problem to order in or eat out.” The problem is that she winds up outsourcing all kinds of personal interactions with her family. Instead of outsourcing increasing quality time, it becomes an inexorable pressure to hire more experts and coaches for all sorts of things. One executive paid an assistant to send flowers to his mother. When she asked him the names of the flowers she had received, he did not know what “he” had sent his mother.

The market has so commodified our tastes, needs, desires, feelings, and logic that many people feel more comfortable purchasing personal services than interacting on a personal level. They feel that personal relations are too complex, embarrassing, or unreliable. Only a few decades ago, before market dominance, people thought just the opposite.

The Pharmaceutical Self

An interesting example of capitalist psychology is the manner in which the self is shaped by the massive presence of corporate pharmaceuticals – especially, psychopharmaceuticals. Anthropologists have called this the “Pharmaceutical Self” (Jenkins, 2010). They begin with identifying “psychopharmaceutical culture.” It is critical to identify such concrete factors and systems and to studiously avoid nebulous cultural abstractions such as “collectivism,” “power difference,” and “neuroticism” which never deal with concrete factors, their organization in a social system, and their politics.

This “anthropology of psychopharmaceuticals” studies them as cultural factors – i.e., as institutions, cultural artifacts, and cultural concepts. The “social life of medicine” includes its existence as a commodity based in capitalist, global corporations, subject to all the principles, dynamics, manufacture, research, and marketing that characterize such corporate products. The cultural politics of medicine also include ways that they are included in government health policy, which, of course, is heavily influenced

by corporate “lobbying.” For instance, drug companies promote neoliberal governmentality that shrinks public services such as mental hospitals so that patients will be sent into society without adequate support and supervision and will require heavy doses of medication, for which they are held responsible to regularly consume. Drug companies also influence psychiatric research – including diagnostic measures such as DSM – to emphasize biological causes of disorders and medical treatments. (This has the political effect of reducing attention to social critique of sociocultural causes of psychological problems, which has occurred throughout the social sciences and in the National Institute for Mental Health.) Drug companies press insurance companies to reduce their compensation to physicians, so that doctors are forced to examine more patients per day and rely more on medication than on involved, personal treatment such as psychotherapy. Neoliberal corporate social philosophy also promotes the notion that individuals are responsible for their own behavior and are not entitled to public support, which further throws patients back onto individual medication (see Applbaum (2009) for a case study of how drug companies organize – “channel” – insurance companies, physicians, hospitals, governmental regulatory agencies, patient advocacy groups, and patients to pay for, prescribe, endorse, and “need” psychopharmaceuticals for an expanding set of disorders. This process seeks to convert these expert gatekeepers into pliable consumers of manufacturers’ propaganda. The process of channeling many disparate players from distinct organizations holding different interests represents an important new stage of corporate management power that is horizontal. This testifies to corporate power becoming more insidious, duplicitous, multiplicitous, and tentacular as it extends beyond its own doors to seemingly independent experts and consumers. This new form of corporate hegemony and its psychological effects and requirements is an important subject for cultural psychologists to study).

These cultural–political–economic elements are built into psychopharmaceuticals. Psychopharmaceuticals thus “totalize” a broad culture of

interrelated factors. The features of this commodity culture are cultivated into the subjectivities of potential patients to prepare them to accept psychotropic drugs as the solution to their problem. Psychopharmaceuticals constitute a cultural “imaginary” which is the conceivable possibilities for human action. The “pharmaceutical cultural imaginary” structures the agency of citizens concerning the directions it is likely to take when casting about to understand and solve life problems.

“Strategic medicalization” conditions patients to view themselves through the cultural lenses of neoliberal social philosophy; budgets; medical care from physicians; biomedical causes of psychological disturbance; autonomous, self-responsible individualism; and fragmented communities with no social support.

Future Directions

Describing capitalism as an exploitive system should lead to a new direction for analyzing (deconstructing) social phenomena and solving (reconstructing) social problems. Social phenomena that are habitual, acceptable, enjoyable, and desirable will be viewed more critically to ascertain whether they embody exploitive features of the capitalist system. One of these is the identification of individualism with freedom, agency, and choice. The truth is that in capitalist society, these four terms are insidious constructs for perpetuating the unequal, unjust class structure. The truth is that freedom, agency, and choice are never individual acts; they are always structured by social positions. Ignoring social positions and pretending that choices are free and agentive simply disguises social conditioning and perpetuates it. When poor black males make choices, they cannot be similar to choices that rich white women make. This is why the wealthiest members of the capitalist class promote individual choice – because they know that this ideology preserves their elite position – it allows them to utilize their resources as the means for implementing choices that poor people can never implement. Really free choices require

that anyone who wants to pursue a desire has the social means for implementing them. This requires changing social conditions which individualism obfuscates.

Another reanalysis (deconstruction) that capitalism affords concerns cultural events such as movies, television, music, advertising, and art. They will be analyzed in terms of whether they oppress people (and prepare them to accept oppression as normal) by fostering superficiality, sensationalism, impulsiveness, irrationality, disarray, egoism, violence, transitory involvement, and passive-uncritical acceptance of information, or whether cultural phenomena foster critical thinking; logical reasoning; character development, drawing conclusions from empirical facts; and social responsibility. Today, there is little cultural critique that resembles the Frankfurt School or the work on cultural kitsch in the 1930s–1960s.

The analysis of this chapter also leads to explaining social problems – including psychological problems – as rooted in fundamental, exploitive features of capitalism. They are persistent because they are functional. Capitalists fight to preserve them and they fight against ameliorating them through political or economic changes. Consequently, social problems should not be construed as mistakes, accidents, anomalies, or technical fluctuations that can be remedied by technically tweaking the system. People must reject bailing out the system and must instead bail out from the system to develop a new paradigm based on new principles, practices, and parameters.

The critique and transformation of capitalism must include the subjectivity, consciousness, or psychology that animates it. Oppressive elements of psychological functions must be identified, critiqued, and reeducated. I explain this in the chapters on Psychology of Oppression, False Consciousness, Macro Cultural Psychology, and Emancipation in this Encyclopedia.

People must seek to develop a concrete oppositional system to capitalism. It must negate the exploitive, core elements of capitalism and replace them with a cooperative, coherent, stable, supportive social system (Hudis, 2012; Ratner, 2013). It will entitle people to own and control

their social institutions, resources, and artifacts. This is the most thorough way to overcome the myriad social problems that are caused by alienation and exploitation.

Emphasizing capitalism's exploitive basis and telos does not mean that capitalism is entirely exploitive or destructive. Future directions for social improvement must analyze capitalism's fruitful features to be used in a humane society. These include respect for individual desires, opportunities, and views, as well as an emphasis on efficiency and innovation, plus large-scale, coordinated enterprises and planning. These cannot be accepted in their current form, which is saddled by the logic of capitalism.

Ethnicity and Multiculturalism

The critical perspective on capitalism emphasizes its exploitive political economy as its central (but not only) element. Exploitation has the strongest explanatory, descriptive, and predictive power concerning behavior. The critical perspective also emphasizes the need to transform the capitalist political economy to a democratic-collective one as the only way to solve capitalism's problems and unify people in a true collective social organization. Movements that do not analyze and transform the exploitive political economy are incapable of understanding and improving human behavior/psychology and social life.

A case in point is the liberal humanistic attempt at respecting diverse peoples and their indigenous cultures/ethnicities. This multiculturalism is deficient despite its good intentions to achieve peace and harmony through respect. One problem is its failure to critically evaluate the diverse cultures/ethnicities it promotes. Multiculturalism/diversity generally takes pride in indigenous, local cultural customs. This blanket respect for virtually all cultures and peoples overlooks their numerous problems. Multiculturalism/diversity additionally fails to engage in critical, political analysis and transformation of capitalism. It presumes that people can be respected just by valuing all cultures/ethnicities and their funds of knowledge/wisdom. If we simply realize how enriching

cultures are, we will respect them, and peace and harmony will follow (Thomas calls this “banal multiculturalism,” see Ratner, 2011 for discussion and citation).

This strategy operates in blissful disregard of the capitalist juggernaut. It fails to analyze or challenge capitalism, retreating instead into local cultural ethnicities. “The cultural turn” is a detour around capitalism that diverts attention from critiquing and transforming capitalism as it glorifies minority customs. This leaves people subject to the ravages of capitalism, including competition, estrangement, egoism, materialism, climate change, financial speculation, class structure, and aggressiveness that prevent respecting and cooperating with people. Indigenous, ethnic customs do nothing to negate these modern, complex, transnational, hi-tech problems. Multiculturalism does not even significantly improve the social position of minorities. Minorities remain marginalized despite decades of civil rights laws to accept them into the mainstream. Ethnicity can only truly be respected in a democratic, cooperative society that supersedes the capitalist political economy (as I explain in my chapter on emancipation in this encyclopedia). This means that the cultural turn should turn

toward critiquing capitalist culture and its psychological correlates.

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Caste Hierarchies

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Introduction

Caste is a mode of social differentiation based on hereditary membership. Caste is common across much of South Asia, though its meanings and significance varies. Caste categories sort populations into groups; the extent and nature of contact between these groups is regulated. Caste membership serves as means of social organization, including labor exchanges, social restriction, social segregation, and rankings. *Endogamy*, the practice of restricting marriages and other close personal relationships to group members, is a feature of most caste systems.

In some societies, certain hereditary groups are considered outcastes – that is, outside the social order. Historically, outcastes have included people whose occupations are associated with death (such as executioners, morticians, workers in slaughterhouses, butchers, and tanners) or pollution (such as sweepers and latrine cleaners). Traditionally, members of these groups have been restricted to residential areas that segregated from other castes.

Although caste is most often associated with India, concepts of caste and caste practices have existed throughout much of South Asia and in some other parts of the world (such as Yemen and Japan). Caste is often associated with the Hindu religion. However, groups of Catholics, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists have practiced (and in some instances still practice) forms of caste exclusion and segregation.

Definition

The remainder of this entry is limited to the practice and conceptions of caste in India. Caste is not a Hindi word, but a word derived from the

Portuguese term *castas* (meaning “color”), which was used to designate different categories of people in the Portuguese colonial regimes in Africa and the Americas. Caste in India, however, does not refer to skin color. *Jati*, the Hindi word for caste, means “birth group” or clan. One is born into a *jati* and this hereditary identity cannot be changed. Depending on local practices, one’s *jati* may be the basis for various forms and degrees of segregation, restriction, and exclusion. In some locales, caste identities have also indexed degrees of impurity or pollution.

Meanings and practices associated with caste are fluid, not fixed. Caste groupings and rankings do not hold across India. In fact, many castes and subcastes exist only in particular regions. Castes and subcastes may form and reform and the relative ranking of castes may be disputed. Although some castes have historically been associated with particular occupations, caste and occupation no longer map onto each other. Nor at present does a family’s caste identity signify its wealth or class position. For example, Indians usually view Brahmins as the highest caste, but many Brahmins are poor. Moreover, meanings and practices associated with caste were significantly impacted by the British during their rule in India (c. 1600–1947).

Well into the twentieth century, caste was associated practices of segregation, exclusion, and discrimination that involved dress codes, food preparation and consumption, and residential and physical segregation, as well as exclusion from places of worship, schools, village wells, and so on. Outcastes – whom British colonials called Untouchables – were considered by caste Hindus as polluting to touch. However, owing to the political mobilization of lower-caste and outcaste groups and to legislation against discriminatory treatment, as well as to urbanization and modernization, such overtly discriminatory practices have decreased.

Keywords

Jati; social differentiation; Dalit; Ambedkar; Gandhi; endogamy

Traditional Debates

In Western scholarship, the classic description of caste in India was Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970), originally published in French in 1966. Dumont traced the origins and governing conception of the caste structure to a *shloka* (verse) from the Vedic text *Purusha Sukta*. Dumont argued that caste distinctions rested on the principle of the opposition of purity and impurity. Dumont further claimed that caste relations in particular regions were expressions of a uniform pan-Indian ideology. Dumont contrasted *homo hierarchicus* of India to *homo aequalis* of the post-Enlightenment West; perhaps not surprisingly, he viewed Western societies as culturally advanced.

Several aspects of Dumont's account were debated. Critics disagreed with Dumont's claim that all caste relations could be reduced to a single pan-Indian ideology. Critics also disputed Dumont's portrayal of caste as an unchanging hold-over from the archaic past. Although they acknowledged that caste is referenced in ancient texts, they objected to Dumont's ahistoricism. They pointed out that the conception of caste and the practices associated with it have been continually shaped and reshaped in response to cultural pressures.

Another arena of contestation has concerned the mistreatment of outcastes. Two preeminent figures in modern Indian political history – Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948) and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956) – took up this issue in the course of the struggle against British imperialism. Both campaigned against caste exclusions, but their choice of discourses and strategies were very dissimilar. Gandhi hoped to promote the societal acceptance of Untouchables by working to end their religious exclusion. He called Untouchables *Harijans* (Children of God, a term now regarded as patronizing). In contrast, Ambedkar, born into a poor outcaste family, campaigned for the legal abolition of caste and for legal and political action against caste discrimination. His term for Untouchable was *Dalit* (which means “oppressed”) (Zelliot, 1996); it is this term that is in common usage today. Ambedkar saw caste as having its origins in Hindu religious tenets. Consequently, toward the

end of his life, he converted to Buddhism. Several hundred thousand Dalits eventually followed.

In India today, caste functions as a powerful political force, with Dalit politicians exerting considerable power. There are a large number of Dalit political parties and workers' unions that draw upon Ambedkar's political thought, as well as a large number of caste associations that promote collective identities and advocate for rights, economic relief, and social justice for low-caste and Dalit individuals. Dalits have been granted “reservations” (the Indian term for quotas) in educational institutions, government, and legislative councils.

Critical Debates

Historians and other scholars of South Asia have turned considerable attention to the question of how foreign colonizers shaped caste meanings and practices during the prolonged period of Western colonization. During the British occupation of India, government agents and other officials altered local practices and understandings of caste to meet their administrative needs and, perhaps, to solidify their grip on power. The classification schemes used in censuses afford one example. As Nicholas Dirks (2001) and others have argued, the imposition of Western-inspired meanings and practices of caste changed local meanings and practices.

For psychologists whose work does not concern India or South Asia, an important question is how caste discrimination compares with and contrasts to other modes of social differentiation. Arjun Appadurai (1988) has observed that caste is not exclusive to Indian society and that it is not India's predominant social formation; therefore, he sternly warns against discussions of caste that exoticize and essentialize India. As Diane Mines (2009, p. 3) reminds us, many of the conditions that sustain caste distinctions are “conditions common to humans all over the world: a concern with power and rank, a sense of self in relation to others, [and] the struggle we all face to matter in a world that doesn't always seem to facilitate everyone's mattering.”

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Online Resources

- International Dalit Solidarity Network: idsn.org
- The Asia Society: asiasociety.org/countries/traditions/jati-caste-system-india

Catharsis

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Introduction

Catharsis is part of Aristotle's theory of recognition in political and esthetic spheres, of Plato's theory of knowledge and medicine, as well as magical conceptions of healing and social adjustment. The purification of the soul in regard to the body, of the body in regard to diseases, and of social imbalance in regard to harmony became central metaphors of politics in the Christian West. Catharsis included *purgation* (as the medical practice of the expulsion of an object or substance that is etiologically responsible for the illness), *purification* (as a cultural practice of reorganizing the antagonisms in a community), and *clarification* (as an individual practice of knowledge and rationalization).

Definition

Catharsis is a Greek word meaning purgation, cleansing, or purification. Aristotle used this

concept of *catharsis* in his work the *Politics* (1342a 8–10) in reference to a cleansing of passions such as fear and piety. In the *Poetics* (1449b 25–30), Aristotle alludes to the purification of affects through tragedy. Just as menstruation and excretion purge the body of excessive substances, in theatre *catharsis* purifies the audience of negative emotions by positioning them outside of one's soul (*ekstasis*).

Catharsis can be its own end or a process of healing, transformation, and treatment when its end is beyond itself. *Catharsis* is an activity or process whereby accidental pleasure has the function of healing, curing, or restoring. A person undergoing a religious frenzy can be cured by *catharsis* induced by "sacred music," for example (*Politics*, 1342a 10). *Catharsis* as an activity in and of itself should be understood as a case of *mimesis*, where the audience's pleasure takes place through the imitation of the emotions felt by the characters in a tragedy. Pleasure from *mimesis* derives from a reencounter with acts and conflicts metaphorized by art and universally recognized as natural or virtuous. Pleasure from *catharsis* is *accidental* since it involves a personage, a conflict, or a particular affect that is recognized by an audience.

Aristotle's idea of *catharsis* is different from Plato's understanding. For Plato *catharsis* is part of a method of coming to knowledge. In *The Sophist* (Plato, 380 BCE/1961, 216b), *catharsis* is the proximity between contradictory beliefs, to the point that the subject perceives the confused character of his or her own thinking and, consequently, the need for purification (*ascesis*) in order to attain knowledge. Plato criticizes poetry and tragedy because they encourage passions that suspend reflection and block the truth. For Plato, *catharsis* has a propaedeutic function. It is a preliminary and preparatory reflection in the process of knowledge, where the senses, preconceptions, and false ideas are set aside. *Catharsis* connotes purification but is understood as a cleansing or dissipation of intellectual obscurities. The second use of *catharsis* in Plato's work is associated with medicine, specifically, the purification of body and soul as a condition for health.

Orphic and Pythagorean traditions saw *catharsis* as a set of magical religious practices of purification, sacrifice, or retribution for transgressions committed. Social purification was carried out through the expulsion of something that symbolizes the origin of evil. Rituals involving the sacrifice of animals were characteristic of practices of *catharsis*, which effected social equilibrium and return to an earlier state of harmony. The gradual displacement from the religious magical sphere to the moral and political sphere contributed to the development of the notion of guilt among the Greeks and was later propagated by Christian theology (Dodds, 1950).

Keywords

Clarification; *ekstasis*; *mimesis*; purgation; purification; harmony; equilibrium; adjustment

Traditional Debates

The ideological use of *catharsis* is associated with political attitudes in the construction and interpretation of social imbalance. From a conservative point of view, “evil” comes from outside of society, from foreigners, and from corrupted ways that did not originate from one’s people, race, or culture. From the ancient or magical point of view, *catharsis* is a practice of social adjustment or re-equilibrium. The medical sense of purging evil can be seen in many different cultural experiences, bodily techniques, and psychotherapeutic methods.

We can associate Aristotle’s interpretation with the liberal point of view, where *catharsis* is mainly a form of negotiation or exchange among elements of pleasure that are pure and impure, universal and individual. We can talk of functional catharsis when the medical dimension of purgation is predominant, integrative *catharsis* (Platonic or Aristotelian) when the dimension of purification of the passions and conflicts predominate, and disintegrative *catharsis* when the social critique contained in the experience of *catharsis* is predominant (Dunker, 2010).

Allegories that liken the role of a physician to a king or tyrant and the art of governing similar to the art of healing, for centuries, justified the oppression, persecution, and segregation of social groups that identified minorities and social differences as the cause of “evil.” Such allegory was adopted by the great twentieth-century totalitarian systems such as Nazism and Fascism. The idea that society should be thought of as a unit and have an identity without contradictions, where heterogeneousness comes from outside as a foreign and impure element, was superimposed over the ideal of family genealogy and, consequently, informed hierarchization, legitimacy, and transmission of power. The practices of individualization, invisibilization, and destitution of the subject can be understood according to such models of *catharsis*.

In the nineteenth century, *catharsis* became a key concept for understanding the place of esthetic experiences in social transformation (e.g., Nietzsche). Where there is regression in thinking and the discharge of tensions in groups and crowds, *catharsis* also was used to explain this mentality on the basis of mimetic thinking. A number of different twentieth-century vanguard artistic movements made reference to *catharsis* and exalted in its power to restore the authenticity of esthetic experience (e.g., Ionesco) or criticized the alienation it fosters in the audience in regard to social contradictions (e.g., Brecht).

Psychology has given us models that take *catharsis* as a synonym for discharging tension and aggressiveness. Psychology has retained the notion of purgation and pleasure but lost the political and esthetic meanings of the concept. In psychoanalysis, the development of the cathartic method gradually replaced hypnotism, which had itself replaced the use of direct suggestion for removing symptoms. Later the cathartic method was used in association with suggestion, in order to facilitate the emergence of repressed representations to consciousness (Breuer & Freud, 1893/1955). The cathartic method involves redirecting the patient’s attention from the symptom to the scene it originated from (Freud, 1895/1955). In approximately 1897 Freud abandoned the cathartic method

and introduced free association and working through the transference. Freud compared the cathartic method to a common procedure in literature whereby imaginary characters are superimposed over real experiences in an independent narrative that is gradually recognized as a single whole (Freud, 1905/1959).

Ferenczi (1930) worked on aspects of the cathartic method that were very important for psychoanalysis. According to him, the intellectual cooling of relationships between analyst and analysand, and the reediting of pathological aspects of the relationships between children and adults in the transference, would lead to a number of undesirable side effects. The technique of *neo-catharsis* was able to fill in for these limitations promoting an emotional intensification of the analyst's relationship with patients by allowing "childishly irresponsible freedoms" induced by physical and mental relaxation; "cathartic manifestations" appeared that were considered essential for healing.

Moreno (1940), the founder of psychodrama, assimilated the cathartic method and praised its ability to recover spontaneity and creativity. He extolled its collective dimension, which was able to reconstruct "pure and true feelings." Moreno seems to have been trying to reunite the dramatic and political traditions of *catharsis* with its therapeutic dimension. For him, there are different types of catharsis: somatic, mental, primary (of actors on the stage), secondary (the audience), individual, and collective.

Critical Debates

More recently, in the context of discussions brought up by feminism, authors like Martha Nussbaum (1994) have reinforced the use of *catharsis* in the context of new conceptions of education, involving the experience of the body and of esthetics. For Nussbaum it is important to introduce the dimension of education present in *catharsis* as a way of cleansing or as an intuitive method for organizing and appropriating the cognitive pleasure inherent to the learning process of an emotional education.

Jonathan Lear (1992) criticizes this understanding of *catharsis* and argues that, for two reasons, *catharsis* cannot be education of the emotions. First, because education is addressed to adults who have already been educated and, secondly, because the cathartic pleasure an audience may feel at a tragic play is not the same as that which one experiences in everyday life. In addition, according to Aristotle, the mere expression or discharge of emotions is not in itself pleasurable. Lear, thus, insists on the irreducibility of the clinical concept of *catharsis* to the field of education without this representing a loss of its political and esthetic dimension.

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Center and Periphery

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Introduction

“Center” and “periphery” are key terms of dependency theories developed in the 1960s and 1970s in order to explain development and underdevelopment. A common feature of these theories was the opinion that capitalist development in Western Europe and North America put countries in these continents into the *center* of the world market while other countries in South America, Asia, and Africa became part of the poorer *periphery*. The center and periphery model dependency theories state that the development of capitalism into a world system has a geographical structure. The center and periphery model is useful not only on a global level but also from a more local standpoint, especially in understanding interdependency between the rich city and the poorer countryside. So both the center and the periphery of the world system include other centers and peripheries in their structures.

Definition

In psychology, the center and periphery model indicates the internationalization of psychology as centers and peripheries in relation to each other. According to this model, the internationalization process of psychology is characterized by the existence of centers with their own conceptualizations and institutions as well as of peripheries dependent on conceptualizations, academic institutions, and structures of the centers.

It can be assessed that, similar to capitalist development, the first centers occurred in Europe within the historical process of psychology. Especially through international exchange, conceptualizations and subject matters of these centers became hegemonic in psychology in peripheral countries. As the indigenization process of psychology in the United States was completed after the Second World War, American psychology became the center of knowledge production in psychology on a global level and peripheralized psychologies in other places, including Europe. The center and periphery model provides a historical analysis of this process that is not simple and linear but highly dynamic, especially because of various interrelationships between different centers as well as between centers and peripheries.

Keywords

Indigenization; internationalization of psychology; psychology in the Third World; polycentric history; modernization; postcolonial situation

Traditional Debates

The traditional historiography of psychology discusses the internationalization of psychology in a unifocal and linear manner. For this historiography, American psychology is the main subject of historical research, and historical process is understood as a continuous development of psychological science from a particular point history – usually Ancient Greece or Wundt’s

laboratory in Leipzig – towards modern American psychology, which is regarded as the most advanced or sophisticated stage. In this narrative, the history of American psychology as the center of world psychology takes the center position, and history focuses on the history of psychology in the United States as well as on some European approaches that are considered predecessors to American psychology. All other concepts are discussed in relation to this central narrative. Therefore, although the center and periphery model is not explicitly mentioned, it is immanent in traditional historiography. In other words, the traditional historiography reproduces relations of center and periphery in its own approach (see Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Rather than be conscious of ethnocentric attitudes, it considers the history of psychology in terms of a continuous subject or a normative core development (Danziger, 1991).

The focal position of American psychology in the world and its isolation from peripheral psychologies aroused early interest in some American scholars. This situation has been discussed in terms of the linguistic isolation of American psychology (Brandt, 1963) or as a reason for psychologists in the United States to neglect other psychologies (Rosenzweig, 1984). A common feature of these approaches is the general suggestion towards more openness to non-American perspectives. But even in these suggestions, American psychology plays a major role in emphasizing possible advantages of international cooperation. Other scholars have even suggested some reforms for more openness through universal scientific concerns at generalizability of the American psychology's results (e.g., Arnett, 2008). Nevertheless, mainstream scholars have neither analyzed America's major position in psychology historically nor discussed the meaning of center and periphery relations for the discipline.

Critical Debates

Such an analysis is done by Danziger (2006), who developed the concept of *intellectual geography*

of center in periphery in psychology. According to Danziger, there were more than one center of psychology before the Second World War, and these centers were characterized by changing interrelationships. For every center there were also peripheries in which scientific practices of the center were reproduced (Pickren, 2009). After psychology was transferred to the United States from Europe, it was rapidly indigenized; its subject matter and methodology were radically changed according to practical needs in the United States (see Danziger, 1985). After the Second World War, various local psychologies in different centers around the world were rapidly replaced by a neo-behaviorist synthesis originating from the United States. The homogenization of international psychology by American psychology argues that social resources supporting psychological research and practice are clearly more rampant in the United States than anywhere else in the world (see also Moghaddam, 1987; Moghaddam & Lee, 2006). Especially through the funding of student exchange programs and international research projects with American resources, American psychology with its own methodology and subject matter rapidly took the center position in global psychology whereas other local psychologies remained in the periphery. Actually, knowledge flow between changing centers had always been an old practice in the history of psychology. But a characteristic feature of the center and periphery relation is that knowledge flow is only unidirectional.

The political background of this unidirectional knowledge flow was determined by developmentalist American foreign aid policy, which was based on the modernization theory that considers modernization as a linear shifting process from the traditional to the modern. According to this theory, social change is a part of political and economical change, and the aim of modernization for traditional societies is to become Western, especially like the United States (Pickren, 2009). Behavioral science that intends to control and predict human behavior was completely in line with this policy, which attempts capitalist development of the Third World (Herman, 1996, pp. 136; Staeuble, 2005).

A precondition of peripheralization is the existence of a modern elite which may become recipients of psychological knowledge produced in the center. Such an elite is a part of colonial geopolitics of knowledge. The knowledge systems of the colonized are distorted by a colonization process, so it can be possible to establish the superiority of Western knowledge although it is a permanent obstacle to postcolonial attempts at developing alternative cultures of knowledge (Staeuble, 2006). Although the modern elite is a part of the colonial situation, it is not a central part of the Western knowledge system. For this elite, peripheralization means practical dependence on the methodology and the conceptualization of the center. Research outside of these methods and concepts is neglected and can even lead to the loss of reputation for researchers. It is necessary for researchers in the periphery to know actual psychological knowledge produced in the center, to follow the center's psychology publications, and even to publish their own research in the language of the center whereas scientific knowledge produced in the periphery is usually neglected in the center or considered a practical contribution from the periphery to the fundamental research of the center.

According to Danziger (2006, p. 213), the center and periphery scheme is applied metaphorically to the internal structure of the discipline. Some areas of the discipline are described as "basic" or "core" areas while others are portrayed as areas of "application" in which basic theories are applied in various practical problems. So core areas are reserved for experimental research on the universal principles of psychology while peripheral areas are meant for the study of local manifestations of these principles. In order to provide universal principles, basic research is considered as independent from historical and social context. On the contrary, practical application can be affected by local and historical conditions and therefore cannot be universally generalizable like basic research. For this reason, peripheral areas are less important and secondary.

Danziger shows a parallelism between geographical and disciplinary centers. Because the geographical periphery does not usually have the

resources for basic research, this remains the privilege of the geographical center. Researchers in the geographical periphery focus on local applications of basic processes and, their possible claims on universal validity for their results are usually ignored by the center. Hence, researchers in the geographical center gain a higher position in the scientific discipline than those from the periphery.

The unidirectional knowledge flow in the center and periphery relationship has caused relevant reactions among scholars in peripheral countries, and it has been argued that the notions of American psychology are not useful in other social contexts. This one-sided dependency is even labeled as "cultural imperialism" or "intellectual colonialism." Attempts at indigenous psychologies are results of these reactions against one-sided dependency.

Indigenous psychologies criticize the notion of value-free and universal knowledge. For indigenous psychologies, psychology is "rather ethnocentric science, cultivated mainly in the developed world and then exported" to other regions (Nsamenang, 1995, p. 729). From the beginning of 1970s, scholars around the world started to question the universalistic assumptions in psychology and called for indigenous psychologies that are culturally meaningful and scientifically valid (e.g., contributions in Kim & Berry, 1993).

Situating psychological knowledge in social and historical context, critical approaches provide an alternative to the one-sided dependency of peripheral psychologies on the center. These approaches also make a critical analysis of psychologists in peripheral countries possible, especially regarding to their position in the center-periphery relationship. Indigenous psychologists may become alienated to the realities of their society and may exclusively focus on the issues of modern sectors of the society which they usually belong to (Moghaddam, 1993). African perspectives of critical psychology (see Hook, 2004), for example, develop a framework for an African-based psychology focusing on the needs of all segments of society, including marginalized groups (Mkhize, 2004).



In writing of psychology's history, the model of periphery and center, contrary to the mainstream's triumphalist linear history approaches that focus only on the center, provides a polycentric history of psychology, which makes a dialectical understanding of the history of psychology in various locations in historical and social contexts possible (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010).

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Online Resources

Kurt Danzigers's Website: <http://www.kurtdanziger.com>

Childhood/Infancy

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Introduction

Children, and even more so infants, present a variety of challenges for a critical understanding of psychology. These challenges are not just methodological, empirical, or theoretical. The concept “childhood” is a vehicle for larger intellectual and social struggles, fundamental to the regulation of today's societies. What childhood and infancy “are” for psychologists cannot simply have been constructed *sui generis*, by the impartial scientific work psychologists do when researching babies. Freud's baby – that crucible of conflicting desires – is primarily the product of the need to ground Freud's theory of instincts. Likewise, Piaget's very different baby – the logician in the cradle – seems to owe its character to its author's intellectual preoccupation with “genetic epistemology.” It is this preoccupation that shaped Piaget's research, not vice versa (Bradley, 1989). In a similar way, infancy and childhood are conceived by psychologists as the

bottom rungs of a ladder of development to adult “normality.” Therefore, questions asked about the very young are questions about the nature of developmental foundations and their consequences for “normality” in later life. It is the formulation of these questions that has proved so significant in the regulation of policy and practice around the rights, early care, “good” parenting, education, and mental health of the young – with diverse consequences for us all.

Definition

The meaning of childhood varies historically and culturally. The English word “infancy” comes from Latin roots meaning “unable to speak” (*infans*). In keeping, psychologists typically define infancy as the period from birth to the acquisition of speech (often taken as 18 months of age), although, in different contexts, the word infant can apply to older children (e.g., in law, anyone who is a minor, that is, under, e.g., 18 years of age, may be called an “infant”). Childhood is even harder to define. It is loosely taken to cover the period between birth and adulthood (i.e., it includes infancy unless a statement is made to the contrary) but blurs around adolescents, who seem neither fish nor fowl. Piaget’s interest in “child development” fades for people older than about 15 years of age. Using chronological age to define infancy and childhood allows psychologists neatly to evade questions about what “psychological maturity” actually means, whether, for example, all adults have really “grown up” and, contrariwise, whether all children are necessarily childish (Selby, 1993). Hence, we get the cheery textbook approach: “Beginnings: 0–1 years; Early Childhood: 1–6 years; Middle Childhood: 6–12 years; Adolescence: 12–18 years; Early Adulthood: 18 years” (cited in Burman, 2008, p. 69).

Keywords

Globalization; thirdness; projection; change; Piaget; normality

History

“History” implies two things here: the general cultural history of childhood (which, to begin with, I will take to include infancy) and the history of how *psychologists* have constructed childhood and infancy.

The idea that the category of “the child” studied by psychologists is a cultural invention, and hence has a history, appeared in the 1970s. William Kessen’s (1979) classic article on this topic drew on various sources: ethnography, the contradictory history of advice to parents, and the volatility of “moral panics” about child welfare over the centuries (think of original sin, masturbation, “good” manners, universal schooling, child labor during the industrial revolution, the ills of child care, Head Start, too much TV, childhood obesity, sexual precocity, violent computer games, child labor in non-Western nations today, and underage drinking). Phillipe Ariés (1962, p. 125) book *Centuries of Childhood* was a key source, with its famous assertion that “in medieval society, the idea of childhood did not exist.” Marxists and feminists advanced compatible arguments, for example: the rise of attachment theory after World War II was part of an ideological move to preserve male economic power; as men returned from the front, the “war nurseries” closed down, and women were told by psychologists that they should get out of the workforce to give their undivided attention to their babies, who otherwise would grow up emotionally damaged (Riley, 1978).

Since the 1970s, histories of childhood have burgeoned (see Burman, 2008, Chaps. 4 and 5). One analysis shows the modern Western idea of “the child” arising from an adult panic about the “unruliness” of children who had gained considerable spending power through their labor. Added to this was the threat of children’s employability undercutting adult wages (in the nineteenth century; Hendrick, 2003). So, rather than being competent, knowledgeable, and productive laborers in the new industrial society, children were recast as ignorant and therefore requiring moral (re)formation through schooling; helpless and innocent, therefore dependent on adults

for protection. This switch from child-as-productive-worker to a child-as-incompetent-innocent has a class dynamic which is now globalized, such that all children are assumed (in the West) to conform “naturally” to the current Western middle-class ideal (Elias, 2000). Furthermore, it sets up an idealization of infancy as purity, categorically opposed to “adulterated” maturity. Moral panics surround any behavior that challenges the symbolic boundary cultures maintain between the two contrasted categories (Douglas, 2005). Hence, a child is “in danger” whenever she or he appears to exist in a way that is symbolically adult. Here fit the panics about the sexualization of young girls (Walkerdine, 1997), childhood obesity, violent video games, child labor in poor countries, too much TV (rather than healthy outdoor play), smoking, etc.

Is psychology’s image of the child immune from cultural forces? Apparently not. Writers like Kessen and Bradley demonstrate how the most influential psychologists create their largely incompatible “visions of infancy” by projecting their own pet theories of human nature onto the child. They go further to show how the methods and procedures of “scientific” psychology idealize infancy, setting up a romanticized picture of the normal child as self-contained, innately benign, precociously gifted with cognitive prowess and an understanding of others and living in an environment unshadowed by illness, hunger, conflict, mood, negativity, nastiness, or neglect. The earliest “environment” is widely assumed to be “the mother.” Hence, to the extent that negativity *does* feature in early childhood, this is “abnormal,” and Mother is to blame. Here we find reproduced in science the broader Romantic middle-class notion of childhood innocence: “Heaven lies about us in our infancy” (Bradley, 1991).

Traditional Debates

Is Early Deep?

English psychology’s first article on the child is often said to be a case study by Charles Darwin (1877) of his infant son. This can be contested,

but it is undoubtedly true that evolutionary ideas helped push forward the “child study” movement at the end of the nineteenth century. One dominant idea was that “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”: the childhood of the individual is a condensed rerun of the species’ evolutionary history. Hence, studying young children opened a window on the depths of our prehistoric biological past. Given that phylogeny advances in stages (i.e., via the formation of distinct species/genera), ontogeny was thought also to comprise stages (Morss, 1990). In short, what appears earliest in childhood is deepest psychologically, being genetically “hardwired.” Other psychologists contest the idea that “early” is *biologically* “deep,” arguing either that humans are uniquely open to the influence of early experience – which is profoundly formative (i.e., *becomes* deep) but not evolutionarily revealing (e.g., Watson, Skinner). Beyond this are those who argue that the very young are too immature psychologically for early experience to be either formative or deep (e.g., Winnicott, 1957). (For more on this, see entries on “► [Developmental Psychology, Overview](#)” and “► [Experience](#)” in this encyclopaedia).

The Ever-More Competent Infant

The decades long predominance in psychology of Piaget’s rather odd theory of child development has spawned a variety of debates. A host of researchers have been drawn into the game of extending, elaborating, refining, or, most fun of all, refuting Piaget. For example, Piaget’s theory holds that children cannot think logically about abstract concepts until they are near their teens. Yet well-taught children seem to be capable of doing quite complex mathematics in primary school. And even toddlers seem to be able to construct and follow grammatical rules, of more than one language at once, in polylingual communities. Babies themselves are supposed by Piaget to live in a constant present of inexplicable evanescent entities amongst which people are indistinguishable from objects until towards the end of the first year. Proving babies to be more competent cognitively (and in other ways, e.g., interpersonally) earlier than previous researchers have claimed has remained a boom industry in

developmental psychology long after Piaget's death, producing a fascinating "race to the bottom" of the developmental ladder – which now has behavior in the womb as its first rung (e.g., Piontelli, 2002; for interim results of this race, see e.g., Bremner & Wachs, 2010).

Asocial Versus Social

An important half revolution in child study was a reframing of the discourse of socialization in the 1970s. The concept of development as "socialization" implies that children start life as under-social or asocial. This is certainly what Piaget's theory seemed to imply, as made explicit by Schaffer (1971, p. 1): "At birth the infant is essentially an asocial being." Against this, attachment theorists had begun to argue vociferously that human children are "born social" (e.g., Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). By this they meant that babies are born evolutionarily primed to form a relationship with their mother or another adult – and their future well-being, emotional and cognitive, depends on the quality of this first one-on-one relationship. I call this a half revolution because it only looks like a revolution if you are on the "attachment" side of the debate. Psychologists interested in children's "cognitive" development still see children's social competence as based in a capacity to "theorize" about what other people "have in their minds." Workable "theories of mind" are only supposed to come into existence around 3 or 4 years of age. Prior to this, children are incapable of genuine "mind reading," being "egocentric" in a way similar to that Piaget claimed (McHugh & Stewart, 2012).

Is There Life Beyond Dyads?

Attachment theory assumes that the foundation of human sociability is the infant-(m)other bond. This belief has flowed through into research on early infant communication. Sudden accessibility to cheap video recording led to an explosion of interest in the minutiae of infants' nonverbal communication when filmed "en face" with their mother or another adult. So, when this new video-based research produced a hypothesis that infants are born with a capacity to share states of mind with others ("innate intersubjectivity"), this

capacity was assumed to be "dyadic" in form (i.e., to involve just two people; Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001). However, the vast majority of child behavior, and human behavior in general, involves more than one other person. Tribes, clans, families, work, schools, sports, entertainment, and leisure are generally undertaken in groups. Yet, neither attachment theory nor the intersubjectivity hypothesis provided evidence or explanation for young children's capacity to participate in social life with more than one other, i.e., in groups. As more and more young children began to attend child care and as the role played in babies' and children's lives by peers, siblings, fathers, grandparents, and acquaintances became more difficult to deny, there were repeated (because fruitless) efforts to move the conceptualization of young children "beyond the dyad" (e.g., Lewis & Takahashi, 2005). Why fruitless? Because, as cultural theorists like Jacques Lacan, Homi Bhabha, and Charles Sanders Peirce have argued, it is impossible to conceptualize society, language, or culture without recognizing that all communication and sociability involves a "third term." There is never solely a speaker and a listener; there is always a preexisting medium, form of life, practice, or convention. There is now the beginning of a movement to study children in groups, although these studies are not liable to afford a general reconceptualization of the complexity of children's social lives until psychologists have themselves acquired a concept of "thirdness" (Bradley, 2010).

Experience or Outcomes?

The use of research on children to construct norms, stages, and standards for normal development is central to the modern regulation of childhood. Hence, a typical test of the pros and cons of child care, for example, will focus on the "outcomes" of nonparental child care versus parental care. What such research ignores is the quality of the moment-to-moment experiences of children while they are living day to day. Where is the child happier? Is this not just as important as whether the child is "developing normally"? Added to this, such research assumes the "natural" universality of a particular class's or

culture's vision of childhood, plus the "stages" it is split into (often artificially, see above; Burman, 2008; Morss, 1990).

Silos

As with psychology in general, subsections of child psychology dealing with different aspects of the child's "mind" tend to act deaf to each others' findings and concepts. We saw an example of this earlier when discussing contrasting views of early sociability: Piagetian versus attachment theory. Thus there is always matter for debate around the integration of different points of view on childhood, the opening up of one silo into another. Of course, some of the silos are empty. Sexuality, fantasy, and desire figure largely in the psychoanalytic vision of the child. But today's American developmental psychology textbook will have little to say about how sex, fantasy, and desire figure in childhood consciousness.

Critical Debates

The (Im)Possibility of Empirical Research

If discourse is the fundamental subject matter of critical psychology (see entry on "► Experience" in this encyclopaedia), then the study of children, particularly babies, may seem a forlorn undertaking. "No wonder psychological visions of infancy are projections (Bradley, 1989)!" it might be said. "Infants can't speak (by definition), and if they can't generate discourse we can't study them, except as 'talked about.'" Hence, empirical research on infants is impossible.

Of course there is a great deal of critical psychological research on children as "talked about," that is, as representations, or as constructed through discourse and practice (e.g., Burman, 2008). However, to abandon the study of children per se because they are not completely articulate implies that all inarticulate, extralinguistic, and unspeaking aspects of being human are beyond the pale of critical study: the body, sex, the dynamic unconscious, nonverbal aspects of communication and practice, human intersections with the nonhuman, illness, death, etc. It also

implies that all we can "get out of" studying discourse is purely verbal. Yet there are many excellent critical treatments of many "nonverbal" aspects of the psychical, as this encyclopaedia attests.

Children's Perspectives

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines the ethico-political obligation to take children's views into account when devising any policy or procedure that may affect the child. This has led to growth of research into children's "perspectives" on matters germane to policy issues, for example, children's perspectives on child care arrangements. The extent to which any researcher can access a child's "perspective," particularly, the perspective of a preverbal child, has led to considerable debate (e.g., Bradley, Sumsion, Stratigos, & Elwick, 2012).

The Misrecognition of Psychological Change

The idea that only children "develop," or conversely that psychological development pertains principally to individuals "growing up," is liable to displace more radical understandings of psycho-societal change. There is a nexus of challengeable notions here. One is that there is a naturally given, chronologically marked "ladder" of psychological changes that universally shape the human life course. This misrecognizes as "natural facts" socially constructed representations of normalized maturity (e.g., rationality, heterosexuality, schooling, abstract morality). It downplays groups as possible foci for developmental study as well as the communal, political, and societal tensions that help construct life chances and self-understandings, thus assuming "development" to be self-generated and self-serving. Are the key differences that psychology's developmentalists should target those between "the child" and "the adult"? Or between social oppression and social liberation? Injustice and justice? Folly and enlightenment? To wit, reasons are seldom given for the "obvious" assumption that children are "lesser" adults, when they might just as plausibly be viewed as equal, different, or better. For example,

Robert Coles (1986) argues that, in moral terms, children may, if given a chance, act in ways that are more courageous than the adults around them.

The Globalization of Childhood

Because most psychologists do not subscribe to the idea that childhood is a historical-cultural invention, they assume that their own well-educated, well-fed, “Western” portrait of the child is universal. Increasingly, critical debate is focusing on challenging judgements made on the basis of this “globalized” image of childhood, including those by international philanthropic and welfare agencies. For example, opposition to child labor in the “third world” seems “obvious” from a globalized middle-class perspective. Yet working children may learn more and feel and be far more useful to their communities than they would by being siphoned off to some nonideal “schooling.” “Childhood has emerged as a domain to be colonized and ‘civilized,’ its mysterious and alien features rendered legible and docile, its ‘voice’ only able to be spoken within adult-defined and regulated discourses” (Burman, 2008, p. 77; Canella & Viruru, 2004).

International Relevance

Insofar as psychological concepts of infancy and childhood are cultural inventions, their assumed international relevance requires deconstruction and critique. See previous paragraph(s).

Practice Relevance

Our concepts of childhood and infancy are crucially implicated in the discourses and practices which construct a society. This is why this topic is so important. For example, psychology’s understandings of childhood inform and are informed by practices surrounding the following: nonparental child care; child mental health; schooling; plus all the norms, moeurs, laws, and rights relating to children (e.g., Walkerdine, 1998).

Future Directions

The critique of notions of childhood and development suggests that (a) psychologists need to acquire what cultural theorists call “thirdness” in their methods and theories if they are going (b) to amplify understandings of children as cultural agents and group members (e.g., Selby & Bradley, 2003). More generally, psychologists need to understand psychical change in a way that is (c) specific to history, society, and culture and (d) less beholden to an individualized and chronologized life course and more beholden to the parameters and needs for collective change in a given society.

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when China became colonized since the mid-nineteenth century. Attempts at indigenization did not have a concrete impact until the 1980s. In the twentieth century, modern psychology in China experienced a number of ups and downs, mainly under the influence of the central government. Presently, psychology in China is enjoying fast development and attention from both inside and outside the country, although problems remain regarding the issues of indigenization, theoretical and methodological innovation, socially oriented practice, government intervention, and professional regulation.

Definition

The concept of “Chinese psychology” in the disciplinary sense has been used over generally. In many articles, it embraces both “Chinese psychology” and “psychology in China” without distinction. Mainstream psychology in China adheres to Western theories, methodologies, concepts, and assumptions; we call it “psychology in China.” The term “Chinese psychology” indicates instead psychological research that is relevant to Chinese culture; it includes both the traditional Chinese psychological discourses as well as the indigenized Western psychology in China.

Keywords

Chinese psychology; indigenization; meaning; politics; practice; psychology in China

History

Growing out of an ancient agricultural society, the psychological experience of the pre-modern Chinese people had a unique nature. It is not reflected by modern psychology that developed in the industrial, bureaucratic Western society and then entered China since the 1840 Opium War. The development of modern psychology in China can be divided into the following five stages.

Chinese Psychology

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Introduction

With its ancient cultural traditions, China has rich and unique psychological discourses as part of its philosophy. Unfortunately, these psychological discourses were replaced by Western psychology

1840–1929

The introduction of Western psychology into China as part of the colonial process embodied the conflict between two civilizations. Wang (1906/1997) commented, “what is lovable is not credible, what is credible is unlovable” (p. 160); in other words, the lovable Chinese tradition lost credibility due to its inability to resist foreign invasion; in contrast, Western knowledge, although extremely strange to the Chinese experience, appeared to be credible. The confrontation between the two cultures finally led to the debate over science and metaphysics (1923–1924) concerning the question of whether to accept the “omnipotent” Western science or stick to traditional Chinese philosophy.

Concerning psychology, the traditional scholars argued that mental phenomena cannot be captured by scientific methods and that traditional Chinese psychological discourses should be preserved. These ideas were criticized by the promoters of science as being blind to the advances made in modern psychology (Hu, 1923/2003). Being tormented by the cultural anxiety and uncertainty of China’s fate, Guowei Wang, a master of Chinese classical studies and a pioneer who introduced Western psychology to China, drowned himself in 1927. Perceived as an advanced and progressive knowledge system, modern psychology won out in China’s political, social, and cultural turbulences. By 1929, China had a few psychology departments, a national research institute (1929), a national academic society (1921), and a professional journal of psychology (1922), all imitating the Western psychology. Modern psychology accomplished its initial institutionalization in China through a colonial path, mediated by Chinese people’s dream of independence, modernity, and progress.

1930–1948

In addition to the further development of modern psychology, a few indigenization attempts were identifiable. For instance, unlike most other psychologists who were committed to bringing industrial, organizational, and educational psychology into China, Xiangeng Zhou (1945)

argued that, given China’s social conditions, “At present, there is no need to pay attention to this (Western) set of psychological techniques” (p. 24). Zhou had realized that psychology as a modern discipline would be rootless without the soil of modernity. Dominated by agricultural economy, China had little modern industry and commerce on which scientific psychology can grow. In Yaoxiang Zhang’s (1940) opinion, it was necessary to carry forward Chinese indigenous psychology, especially the psychology about how to live one’s life, so that Chinese psychologists can make international contributions. Chiang Kai-shek, the then president of China, was psychoanalyzed by Xiaorong Xiao, who obtained a doctoral degree in psychology at the University of California. But Chiang Kai-shek soon gave up on psychoanalysis, considering it incompatible with the Yangming School of Mind in which he believed.

1949–1965

In this period, psychological research was often directed by the newly established government of the People’s Republic of China. Chinese Psychological Society proposed to adopt Marxism-Leninism as the guiding philosophy and Pavlovian reflexology as the orthodox theory. Most Chinese psychologists claim to define the scientific status, objects, goals, and methods of psychological study according to Marxist philosophy, though it is debatable to what extent they correctly interpreted Marxism. In an attempt to support socialist development, psychologists in that period had a strong emphasis on applied psychology such as educational psychology, engineering psychology, and medical psychology. In 1957 and 1958, the rectification movement and the “Pull out the White Flag” movement led to a nationwide criticism of the abstraction and biologization tendencies that made psychology a “bourgeois pseudo-science.”

1966–1976

During the Cultural Revolution, psychology was considered a Western bourgeois science and became totally negated. After the publication of

“Is This the Right Scientific Method and Direction to Study Psychology?” by the politician Wenyan Yao (1966), class analysis became the only legitimate method for understanding psychological phenomena. All psychologists lost their positions as research institutes were closed, courses canceled, laboratories shut down, and books destroyed. Only a handful of works were finished secretly. A few attempts to restore psychology remained unsuccessful.

1977-Present

In the post-Cultural Revolution era, psychology in China embraced revival. Psychologists not only restored research institutions, departments, and journals, but also produced a considerable amount of research findings. In 1999, the Ministry of Science and Technology of China included psychology as one of the 18 key disciplines that receive government support. Now, there are over 300 psychology departments in China and psychology courses are taught at most universities. While the majority of Chinese psychologists still follow the Western mainstream model, others have been developing critical research over the last few decades without using the label of “critical psychology.” They have introduced German critical psychology, feminist psychology, social constructionist psychology, community psychology, and participatory action research, and criticized the theoretical assumptions, methods, and social relevance of mainstream psychology from philosophical, historical, social, cultural, and political perspectives. While a handful of psychologists attempt to develop a Marxist psychology, most Chinese psychologists pretentiously invoke Marxism without actually using it to guide their research and practice (Wang, 2010). A number of initiatives of indigenizing psychology became realized since the 1980s; some of them, such as “the Seven-Factor Chinese Personality Model” (Wang, 2004), examine Chinese psychological phenomena with the Western method, while others, such as “the Double-Y Model of Basic Human Needs” (Yang, 2003), are built on the traditional Chinese culture.

Traditional Debates

The traditional Chinese psychological discourses far preceded the import of Western psychology in the nineteenth century. They are often part of a diversity of Chinese philosophies including Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Legalism, Naturalism, Mohism, agriculturalism, and other schools over the past 3,000 years. Due to space limitations, this entry can only discuss some of the most distinctive features of these traditional thoughts.

In contrast to Western mainstream psychology, which emphasizes analytical, reductive, formal, and rational thinking, Chinese psychology often favors synthetic, contextual, dialectical, and intuitive understanding. Specifically, Chinese thinkers believe that the mind is not isolated from the environment; that the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity is less useful; and that knowledge, often with an inherent ethical dimension, is closely related to lifeworldly praxis.

In the Western rational tradition, mind and matter have often been conceived as ontological contrasts. The holistic philosophy in China is more interested in discovering the practical and meaningful relation between the two as embedded in lifeworldly contexts. Yangming Wang’s (1472–1529) neo-Confucian philosophy (Wang, 1963) provides a good example. Wang believed that the mind is not a given, independent entity, and is instead a phenomenon that only comes into being through illuminating the matter, which process generates meaning. At the same time, the matter is not a given, static, isolated physical entity; it is instead defined as an event or activity that takes place within the lifeworld and that is imbued with meaning. Wang did not deny the existence of the thing-in-itself; he was just not interested in a naturalistic, mechanical, meaningless kind of existence. From an existential perspective, mind and matter exist within mutual relation.

This existential ontology defines psychological knowledge in a way different from Western psychology. To Wang, it was

undesirable to seek outward, objectified truth; the exclusive focus on objects or concrete entities overshadows the convergence between the inside and the outside. Knowledge acquired through objectification distracts the mind from the existential realm and is closed to the meaning of life; the rigid dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity does more harm than good.

There are other aspects in which Chinese psychological knowledge is different from the Western one. Knowledge is not narrowly defined in the empirical sense but also consists of spiritual understanding and dialectical reflexivity. Less interested in universal, abstract causal laws, many Chinese thinkers, particularly the Taoist philosophers, understand knowledge as flexible, contingent, and interpretable. Further, ancient China had few social demands for studying psychological phenomena in the laboratory context with experimental and statistic methods. Causal thinking and technical control did exist but it was unimaginable for Chinese thinkers to fully separate knowledge and practice from the meaning of life. Instead, Chinese psychological knowledge was mostly derived from contextualized understanding and is praxis-oriented.

Rich debates have taken place over the relation between knowledge and practice and ways of achieving the two. Most Chinese philosophers believe that, on one hand, it is impossible to know without practicing; practice is the source and final purpose of knowledge; it can also test and deepen knowledge. On the other hand, practice is not only guided and motivated by knowledge, but also becomes meaningful only when the subject has a clear knowledge of it.

Youlan Feng's (1942) concept "consciousness" (JueJie) illustrates the intrinsic connection between knowledge, practice, and ethics. According to Feng, we always practice with meaningful knowledge. How much meaning we acquire from our activity depends on the depth and breadth of our consciousness and in turn determines our intellectual-spiritual realm. People who follow instincts or social rules without reflexivity fall into the natural realm; people who act based on the principle of social exchange fall into the utilitarian realm; people

who act on the behalf of the society enjoy the moral realm; and people who grasp the universal spirit become a saint in the heaven-and-earth realm. According to this view, people might exhibit the same behavior with totally different meaning in that behavior; this is a rejection of the Western objectivist, behavioristic psychology. To Chinese thinkers, knowledge and practice are interconnected and both immersed in the lifeworld.

Critical Debates

Chinese or Western

The previously mentioned metaphysics-science debate embodies the conflict between tradition and modernization. Most Chinese psychological research, consciously or unconsciously, attempts to modernize Chinese experience and society. Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the president of the Republic of China, wrote a book on "mental construction" of new citizens (Sun, 1919/1956) the vision of which led to the establishment of "Chinese Society for Mental Construction" (1942) and the journal *Mental Construction*. One psychologist said, "Many people shared the belief that the reform of China must begin with the transformation of the society; if you want to transform the society you must conduct thorough research, and psychology must be one of the tools for such research" (Wang, 1933, p. 18). Lurking behind this optimism is the facts that modernization is often a synonym of westernization and that modern psychology is a colonial artifact.

The majority of Chinese psychologists attempt to "develop cumulative scientific explanations of human experiences and behaviors" (Wang, 2011, p. 127) and fail to notice the theoretical and practical limits of the Western research paradigm. Reflecting on the incompatibility between Western theories and Chinese experience, Hsia (in press) likens the construction of "Chinese psychology" to the attempt to bake an American pie with a Chinese stir-fry. She urges Chinese psychologists to ask themselves, when trying to connect the colonizer's theory to the colonized experience, "how we

can create and develop a social life space that allows both the collective and the individual (i.e. us) and between the collectives to jointly make ‘the recognition and understanding of de-colonization’ and ‘the choices of restructuring/re-ordering’ possible?”

Power of the Government

Throughout history, the Chinese government played a critical role in directing the research topics, theoretical orientation, and institutional structure of psychology. Against this background, Chinese psychologists often invoked academic freedom to defend their autonomy. However, it is noteworthy that while a number of political interventions, such as the Cultural Revolution, led to disastrous results, in other periods government support greatly promoted the development of psychology. We cannot simply view Chinese psychology as being victimized by communist politics given that the claim of academic freedom in the West is belied by the pressure from government, military, industry, commerce, neo-liberalism, and so on. Instead of uncritically emulating Western capitalistic psychology, it is legitimate to consider how psychology might operate in a socialist country to improve human conditions.

Socially Oriented Practice

The social relevance of psychology is limited in a few ways. At the level of regulation and administration, researchers’ qualification is often evaluated in terms of numbers of publication, instead of the content, the theory, and practical significance of the research findings. In popular culture, psychological knowledge is often confused with so-called science of success, unqualified psychotherapy, and astrology. Meanwhile, mainstream psychology is often prevented by the positivist paradigm from providing socially relevant practice. These problems require Chinese psychologists to go out of the laboratory while enhancing disciplinary/professional regulation. Some Chinese psychologists have urged replacing methodologism with “a psychology for the people” that may contribute to Chinese people’s health and well-being (Zhong, 2009).

International Relevance

In recent decades, Chinese psychologists have started to play an active role internationally. In 1980, Chinese Psychological Society became a new member of the International Union of Psychological Science. In 2004, China hosted the twenty-eighth International Congress of Psychology. In the following years, China had the thirteenth Biennial Conference of the International Society for Theoretical Psychology (2009) and the ninth Biennial Conference of the Asian Association of Social Psychology (2011). A number of Chinese psychologists have served as co-chair, vice president, council members, and executive members in the International Union of Psychological Science, International Association of Applied Psychology, Afro-Asian Psychological Association, and International Test Commission. There is a growing international interest in the psychology discipline in China (Blowers, 2000) as well as in Chinese people’s psychology and behavior (Bond, 2010).

Western psychologists, with either neocolonial or postcolonial motivation, are often interested in Chinese psychology for both intellectual and pragmatic purposes. On the one hand, caught between tradition and modernity, the East and the West, and communism and capitalism Chinese people’s mental life and behavior within the complex sociocultural context provide unique samples for a richer understanding of subjectivity as well as the individual-society dynamics. On the other hand, the rising economic and political significance of China in the globalizing world necessitates the understanding of Chinese people for numerous pragmatic reasons, which are debatable in terms of political implications.

Practice Relevance

China is currently at a crucial stage of development in which psychology can make significant contributions. Having gone through thousands of years feudal, agricultural society and a century of wars and reformations, China has arrived at its new epoch since the economic reform in 1978.

This reform greatly accelerated the modernization and westernization of China, substituting the planned economy and employment with free entrepreneurship and competition. The traditional Chinese value and practice no longer keep the society in order; the ideologies of collectivism and filial loyalty are being disintegrated and reassembled with awakening democratic awareness and individualism that are growing out of the new ways of production and social relations. These rapid and multifaceted social transformations expose Chinese psychologists to many great challenges: poverty, disease, crime, overpopulation, a single-child family structure, worker migration, corruption, dishonest entrepreneurship, an aging generation, and so on. Some of these problems are unique to China while others pose a greater urgency in China than in many other societies. For example, there were 240 million migrating workers in China in 2011 and their working and living conditions are worrisome.

The historical context of China requires reflexive understanding and practicing “critical psychology.” Differing from the industrialized, urbanized Western societies, China’s unique social needs blur the usually assumed boundary between mainstream psychology and critical psychology. In spite of various limitations, mainstream psychology meets some Chinese people’s most urgent needs and empowers them with regard to education, employment, and health care. Critical Chinese psychologists should engage themselves with historically informed negotiation and evaluation between expedient application of mainstream psychology for solving urgent problems and exploring more critical psychological practice for long-term development. The blurring of the mainstream/critical boundary also has an overshadowing effect: mainstream psychologists may take for granted the methodological and ethical rightness of their research and practice, ignoring the necessity of critical reflection. Perhaps that counts as one reason why there has not been an explicit “critical psychology” in China. Chinese psychologists need to take a more critical stance toward injustice across geographical regions, genders,

generations, ethnicities, and professions regarding wealth distribution, living and working conditions, education, and health care. They also need to empower Chinese people for better socio-political engagement, which has been and is still lacking due to the traditional ideology and the current government policy.

Future Directions

China often finds psychologized discourses about progress and modernization. In a prize-winning novel (Zhang, 1981/1989), psychology becomes synonymous with China’s reform, as well as the tool to emancipate Chinese people from the ideology of planned economics. In this novel, the Ministry of Heavy Industry reformists attempt to replace the traditional ways of production and management with behavioral science through establishing the nation’s first industrial psychology major jointly with an H University. This scenario reveals two problems. Mainstream psychology as reflection of Western political and economic realities is often dogmatically applied to the complex Chinese society that contains pre-modern, modern, as well as post-modern components. Further, if the theorization is correct that psychology, as the most flexible practice to replace revolution, benefits from the failure of the revolution against capitalism and creates new space for the capitalist bio-politics, then Chinese psychologists need to reconsider the historical role of psychology in the socialist China.

Against the dramatic economic and social changes taking place in China, psychology is attracting increasingly widespread public concern and has begun to play an important role in both the private and the public spheres. The way people understand themselves, others, and the world is increasingly mediated by psychology. Chinese psychologists must think about how to deal with the phenomenon of psychologization (Wang, 2012). Historical analysis of the material production and reproduction in China is required for evaluating and indigenizing Western psychology. Chinese indigenous psychologists have called for a systematical revision of

psychological theories and methodologies on the basis of Chinese sociocultural reality so that psychological research can fulfill its social responsibilities.

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Online Resources

- Chinese Psychological Society: <http://www.cpsbeijing.org/en/index.php>
- Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences: <http://english.psych.cas.cn/>
- Acta Psychologica Sinica: <http://journal.psych.ac.cn/xuebao/en/dqml.asp>
- Journal of Psychology in Chinese Societies: http://www.chineseupress.com/asp/JournalList_en.asp?CatID=1&Lang=E&JournalID=6#1
- Chinese Journal of Psychology: <http://140.112.62.214/cjp/>
- China needs its own psychology (People's daily online article): http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200408/12/eng20040812_152673.html

Circuits of Dispossession and Privilege

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Introduction

How do histories and structures of cumulative disadvantage and privilege seep into the social psychological landscapes of children, youth, and adults? This is a profoundly important question of epistemology, theory, and design for researchers who are committed to documenting the everyday collateral damage of and emergent collective resistance to the wave of swelling inequality gaps, neoliberal transformations of state and capital, global movements of bodies, and government declarations of austerity surrounding us today.

As a provisional response to this question of design, Michelle Fine and Jessica Ruglis (2008) offer the concept *circuits of dispossession and privilege* as a conceptual framework for studying how structural injustice moves under the skin of privileged and marginalized individuals. Contesting the simplicity of social determinism and naïve individualism, a circuits analysis recognizes that growing up in the vortex of inequality gaps fundamentally shapes (but does not entirely determine) how people see and explain injustice, view self and others, and embody and negotiate dominant justifications for injustice and when people join solidarity movements for social justice.

Definition

A circuits analysis deliberately torques our critical gaze away from asking “what’s wrong with these victims?” toward analyzing instead how structures, histories, and dynamics of injustice travel into communities and bodies. More specifically, a circuits analysis investigates the social psychological transit of inequity across scale (structure, policy, institutions, relationships, psychological, and embodied Selves), across place (nation, zip code, communities of privilege, and disadvantage), and across sectors (education, labor, criminal justice, health, and psychological well-being). Most ambitious, research projects grounded in circuits analysis interrogate *how* social policies widen and constrict landscapes of psychological possibility for persons based on the fluid intersections of class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, immigration status, (dis)ability, and geography. A circuits analysis is curious about how policies affect place, social relations, and identities, which flow into a range of social psychological outcomes. Circuits researchers have interrogated a variety of social psychological dynamics including critical consciousness and perceptions of and/or reactions to injustice; a variety of “health” indicators including evidence of anxiety, allostatic load, depression, alienation, psychological well-being, trust, placing one’s self at “risk,” and sense of possible

selves; and willingness to work for social change. (See Fine & Ruglis, 2008; Fox & Fine, 2012; Torre, Fine, Stoudt, & Fox, 2012).

A circuits analysis insists that traditional binaries are viewed dialectically, in relation, over time, place, and group. Extending Lewin’s belief that psychologists should study *dynamics* rather than *variables*, a circuits design calls for the study of dynamics across time, place, and group. Fundamentally, a circuits analysis challenges traditional designs by which psychologists study poverty, risk, well-being, or merit within a place, or within a group, and requires instead that social analyses be extended across sites of wealth and poverty, advantage and disadvantage, and prosperity and deprivation in order to understand the active and redistributive dynamics of dispossession not simply the site in which injustice takes hold. A circuits analysis troubles the easy gravity pull of cultural explanations or victim blame.

Recognizing that privilege and oppression are profoundly and intimately interdependent and that inequity travels through bodies over time and place, the construct *circuits of dispossession and privilege* builds a psychological argument in conversation with political theorists of neoliberalism, critical race theorists, and the writings on the epidemiology of inequality gaps. The term *neoliberalism* has been used to characterize the current political, economic, and ideological system that privileges an unregulated market as the most efficient mechanism for distributing social goods, minimizing the role of government responsibility in assuring collective well-being and highlighting instead individual responsibility for individual outcomes. By facilitating market-driven reform to determine how and for whom opportunities and burdens redistribute, neoliberal policies globally and locally facilitate the upward flow and control of resources, opportunities, and power toward wealthy communities, privatization, and corporate interests, braided with a downward drip of surveillance and blocked opportunities for those historically marginalized, shifting our understandings of nation, citizen, migrant, diaspora, and human(e) security. A circuits design seeks to understand how these

global and local arrangements contribute to a recalibrating of identities, sense of (in)justice, affects and anxieties, desires, and emergent solidarities (see Harvey, 2004; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Keywords

Neoliberalism; circuits; participatory action research; privilege; dispossession

History

While the language of circuits analysis is relatively new to psychology, the central epistemological commitments are anchored in a long-standing if buried tradition of US social science projects designed to understand dynamics in the Lewinian sense (1939), to track how structural and economic conditions imprint on bodies that appear to be at “risk.” Classic studies of marginalized communities and individuals such as Du Bois’ (1899) *Philadelphia Negro* and Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel’s (1933) *Marienthal* were situated explicitly within an analysis of the economic and political conditions that shaped these communities. Du Bois investigated how racial segregation and oppression produced the “Negro problem,” and Jahoda et al. traced the footprints of the “worldwide economic crisis” on the health and aspirations of everyday people in a fully unemployed community in Austria.

A circuits analysis undertaken in the early twenty-first century would aim to understand how people conceptualize their hyphenated identities and social obligations in times of rising human insecurity, segregation, stratification, and existential precarity (Sirin & Fine, 2008; Stoudt, Fine, & Fox, 2012).

The term circuits of dispossession was first developed in 2008 by Fine and Ruglis when we were testifying in an education-equity class action lawsuit. Archiving materials from across fields, our task was to demonstrate how a single educational policy (high stakes testing requirements for graduation) could spike dropout rates, particularly

among low-income youth of color, and thereby unleash a broad range – or circuits – of adverse consequences across sectors including education, economics, health, criminal justice, and reproduction. This initial framing of a circuits design was meant to encourage studies on how a single policy-induced dispossession can unleash uneven racial and classed consequences across sectors and across communities (see Fox & Fine, 2012 on housing and mortgage foreclosures policy analysis). This view of dispossession, as induced by social policy, not an unfortunate and unanticipated outcome, expands the thinking of early social psychologists by recognizing that distal factors including global politics, economics, ideology, and opportunity structures dramatically affect a wide range of conditions, relations, and social psychological features embodied by individuals. This framework challenges traditional formulations of intergroup conflict or system justification by encouraging researchers to analyze beyond the immediate, often experimentally induced context of social relations and singular outcomes, to appreciate instead the historic and broader social dynamics within which two groups may be arguing over limited resources or within which a disadvantaged group may justify a system from which they are being excluded. A circuits framework troubles recent work on disparities between groups and insists that researchers interrogate more boldly the structures that create and sustain disparities, not the intragroup dynamics that may explain the disparities. Circuits is a critical, power-sensitive extension of Lewin’s force field analysis.

By 2009, circuits analyses began to extend toward critical geography as researchers amassed evidence on the circuited coproduction of privilege and disadvantage across communities. A participatory study with New York City youth on schooling opportunities/criminal justice entanglements produced data to suggest that as resources and opportunities were made available in wealthy communities, a comparable set of resources and opportunities were being withdrawn from poorer communities (see Fox & Fine, 2012). Thus, the second wave of circuits theorizing called for systematic investigations of the interdependence of contiguous communities,

poor/working class, and privileged, which may appear to be autonomous but are materially and psychologically hinged. This second installment of circuits calls into the question many of the identity categories that traditional psychology takes for granted: gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, disability, or nation. A circuit framework begins with that assumption that identities cultivated within structures of inequity and stratification are systematically coproduced in the soil of inequity. A circuits analysis thereby refuses to consider a “group” or social identity – poor, rich, Black, Muslim, white, straight, etc. – as if it were autonomous, disconnected, and isolated from other groups, systems of stratification, and larger historic forces. In this way, a circuits analysis challenges the essentialism of traditional (even “progressive”) independent variables (gender or race) and the alleged stability of traditional outcome variables, seeking instead to problematize standard identity categories and theoretically suture variables, communities, and identities seemingly disconnected. Thus, for example, instead of studying risk within low-income communities by placing these neighborhoods and youth under a microscope to investigate drug use or unsafe sex practices, a circuits analysis would interrogate how different communities have access (or not) to sex education, drug education, and reproductive health care; how youth across wealthy and impoverished communities engage in behaviors with high stakes; and then who pays a price for the risk. We then learn that White students, compared to Black and Latino, have far more access to sex education and health care; engage in more drug-related activities; and are far less likely to serve time in prison for drugs. By so doing, “race” is no longer the independent variable that predicts drug use but becomes the severely uneven landscape upon which opportunities, second chances, supports, and criminalization practices are maldistributed.

A third analytic application of circuits theorizing emerged in 2012, when Maddy Fox, in the tradition of DuBois, began to develop social psychological practices for the provocative dissemination of research findings through performance.

Fox sought to induce circuits of solidarity between marginalized youth performing the data on dispossession to relatively privileged audiences prepared to be empathic but not provoked to action. (Fox & Fine, 2012) This third enactment of circuits, as a platform for revealing interdependence and inducing solidarities, opens up an area of inquiry within social psychology that has been underdeveloped. Challenging our disciplinary beliefs that people are driven primarily by self-interest and motivations to justify inequity and protect one’s own group, a circuits of solidarity strategy is premised on the belief that people may be motivated and induced to promote justice and engage with allies for more just distribution of opportunities and resources. Consequently, this work expands and complicates how psychologists think about dissemination as a powerful dynamic of engagement, rather than a passive process of publishing and hoping that our work is read by power brokers.

A fourth analytic application of circuits analysis is beginning to emerge as post-colonial scholars interrogate how the global migration of capital and opportunity has activated a Northern migration of bodies, particularly low-income women’s bodies, to care for emergent needs of families now abandoned by shrinking welfare states. Rooted in Cindi Katz’s writings (2004) on counter-topography, this line of inquiry considers the (in)humane excess produced across nations, by a floating market economy, redistributing wealth, need, despair, and exploitation around the globe (see Sunhil Bhatia on the rise of call centers in India and the de-Indianization of tongues, 2012; Wen Liu on the exploitative transport of migrant women’s bodies from the global South to the global North to care for family needs left unattended by neoliberalism, 2012; and Maria Elena Torre and Jennifer Ayala’s work in Nicaragua on the rise of tourism and the consequential rise in violence against/trafficking of young women). These projects reveal global circuits of exploitation and embodied resistance circling the globe.

A fifth arena for circuits research is just beginning to track how social movements and social media can incite the collective political imagination through emergent and spontaneous circuits

of solidarity and resistance, particularly through the OCCUPY movements and also a series of domestic violence, disability rights, and nonviolence movements.

Traditional Debates

While an epistemological commitment to circuits is relatively new, there are emergent debates within the field, addressing method, unit of analysis, and strategies of application. Two “traditional” debates plague circuits analyses: *the tension between structure and agency* and the tension of *place based vs. global analyses*. In terms of design, researchers and activists working with a circuits framework document the streaming of dispossession and privilege across sectors by tracing how (dis)advantage in education, health, criminal justice, and/or psychological well-being (re)produces cumulative (dis)advantage which lands into distinctly situated bodies varied by race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, gender, (dis)ability, and immigration status, within communities and across global contexts (see Stoudt, Fine, & Fox, 2012). While this type of analysis is expansive, critical, provocative, and interdisciplinary, an important critique is that it can be viewed as overdeterministic, obscuring evidence of agency, resistance, and/or renegotiation by those who are being dispossessed. This critique maps onto a much older argument between those who focus on structure and those who focus on agency.

In a related way, an analysis that tracks global circuits of dispossession both within and across place, within local settings, and through transnational capillaries runs the risk of overlooking critical and distinct features of local culture, tradition, resistance, and transformation, skipping over local variation in an effort to document highways of social psychological impact across place (Fox & Fine, 2012).

Critical Debates

While circuits analyses suggest a relatively new framework for inquiry within psychology, the

work is inspired by Lewinian writings on topography and dynamics, plagued by long-standing questions of epistemology that have haunted psychology, and because of the commitment to study social dynamics across groups, time, and place, a number of design dilemmas are worthy of consideration and deliberation.

What Is a “Good Enough” Unit of Analysis?

If we are studying the social psychological impact of systems of inequality on communities, movements, and lives, what is a “good enough” unit of theoretical analysis? How might researchers draw a conceptual border around circuited research questions? Given that a circuits analysis deliberately contests psychology’s fictional commitment to bounded selves, bounded groups, and bounded constructs, an obvious tension involves the question of where/how/when to bind a research project; how far out does the analysis have to reach? Does the study of a marginalized community have to also investigate the biography of its privileged neighboring community? How can deep analytic work within a community interrogate the surrounds without fully taking on a second project? How much is enough?

What Counts as Evidence?

While the circuit framework calls for a bold theoretical landscape for analysis, researchers vary wildly in terms of the kinds of evidence they gather. A circuits analysis may be organized around the study of lives (see Akerman on the lives of Tibetan exiles in New York City, 2011), relationships (see McClelland on sexual satisfaction in relationships, 2010), an encounter between distinctly positioned “others” (see Maria Elena Torre on contact zones, 2010), or the pharma-advertisements and narrated embodiments of psyche diagnoses (see Rachel Liebert on the production of bipolar disorder, 2010). Or, evidence might be drawn from an archival statistical analysis of foreclosure records (Fox & Fine, 2012), a community-wide survey (Fox & Fine, 2012; Stoudt, Fine, & Fox, 2012), an ethnographic analysis of interaction at a border crossing or a checkpoint (Billies, 2010), discourse

analysis of a community meeting about policing and racial profiling (Stoudt, Fine, & Fox, 2012; Weis & Fine, forthcoming), or a transnational ethnography where colonial footprints and imperial dialects can be traced across the globe (Liu, 2011). No unit is too large or small for a circuits analysis.

Under What Conditions Might Circuitry Analyses Inadvertently Induce Epistemological Violence?

Drawing on Teo's (2011) notion of epistemological violence, whereby research produces "evidence" that reinforces stereotypic and demeaning views of groups, the circuits framework needs to be designed carefully to avoid such ideological reproduction. There are important conversations being had, particularly in participatory designs, about the extent to which a circuits analysis may unwittingly facilitate narratives of damage to "prove" injustice and thereby unleash epistemological violence. Without delicate theoretical padding, methodological attention to buffers and mediators, and substantial conversation in community, a circuits analysis can seem to overdetermine evidence of adverse outcomes or "damage" within low-income communities and underproduce evidence of agency and resilience. Two provisional adjustments are as follows: It is important to demonstrate the damage/adverse impact in privileged communities as well and it is essential to work through in participatory designs how negative impact is represented in findings.

To What Extent Does the Introduction of Mediators or Moderators Potentially Dilute Evidence of Structural Injustice?

There are quiet debates between those who want to study buffers, e.g., what can be done *now* to minimize the adverse impact of dispossession on youth, and those who want to demonstrate the unmitigated dramatic costs of dispossession on marginalized communities. Thus, a quiet internal conversation asks, how do researchers prevent the misuse of mediators or evidence of resilience to undermine claims about the adverse impact of

structural injustice? To what extent might research on how mediators or "circuit breakers" can buffer young people from the most toxic technologies of dispossession be distorted into victim blame?

The Body

To what extent are researchers interested in demonstrating the physical health/biological/neurological consequences of oppression and dispossession (unless these outcomes are reversible) (Hacking, 1995; Liebert, 2012)?

The Ethics of Representation, Interpretation, and Dignity

What are researchers' ethical responsibilities to representations of respect and dignity as individual lives are placed in historic and structural contexts to which they are exposed, but with which they may not identify or even be aware? When researchers find, for instance, that a public policy bears negative consequence for the next generation, how might these data get presented with respect for those struggling with the constraints of poverty and the damaging consequences of this policy? Who decides which structural and historic contexts become the foreground for our research? Issues of representation, authority, authenticity, interpretation, and dignity linger with ethical weight in a circuits analysis (see Cahill, 2010; Luttrell, 2003), resolved somewhat in participatory designs where the very people being "represented" are also engaged as researchers, analysts, and producers of research materials.

International Relevance

A circuits analysis is becoming most popular in scholars working across national borders on indigenous and/or migrant struggles (Smith, 2012). For instance, neocolonial scholars are tracing how identities and intergroup relations shift over time and place, as global capital spawns new opportunities in some regions while depleting resources from across colonial and former colonized sites. Likewise, social movement

scholars are studying the global/local conditions under which State violence and voracious privatization are inciting broad sense of collective responsibility and outrage (Muñoz-Proto & Opotow, 2012).

Across a variety of national borders, topics, methods, and theoretical frameworks, a set of shared epistemological commitments anchor circuits' analyses understandings of dialectics of power, intersectionality of identities, and shared fates. It is understood that the "haves" and "have nots" are neither coherent nor separate categories; they are complex and linked. On identities, there is an epistemological recognition that people are always intersectional and negotiating complex relations to power; the "identity groups" which social psychology has unfortunately naturalized are intimately bound within structures of inequality and potentially in critical solidarities. Finally, on shared fates, a circuits analysis contends that we are all implicated in systems of inequality; no one is a bystander or witness to injustice. We are all responsible to activate change within, and across, borders of nation and social identities.

Practice Relevance

While the area of inquiry is relatively new, at least within psychology, distinct strains are beginning to emerge. To offer a few examples:

Environmental psychologists are tracking how the privatization of housing, mortgage foreclosure, housing precarity, and overcrowding impact physical and psychological well-being, disparities in childhood health, and the willingness to engage in activism for housing as a human right (Saegert, Fields, & Libman, 2009). Likewise, scholars documenting the redlining of educational opportunities are now tracing the economic, health, and criminal justice implications of denying poor, working class, immigrant youth access to higher education. Epidemiologists and health psychologists are cataloguing how economic collapse and neoliberal shifts in [immigration/criminal justice/education/social welfare] policy unleash a proliferation of panics

of risk, terror, and rising diagnoses; they are investigating how public policy can threaten collective health, as (dis)ease moves from the structural to the cellular (Liebert, 2010). Critical criminology researchers are studying how austerity budget cuts paired with expensive surveillance regimes are reshaping community life, by underinvesting and underdeveloping the educational and civic capacities of young people in low-income communities and overinvesting and overdeveloping their levels of criminalization, with significant consequences for communities dissembling and rises in violence, school dropout, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, crime, homelessness, and structural disorganization.

Beyond these critical community-based researchers who are documenting the tentacles of dispossession, there is also a movement of practitioners working in single fields (e.g., education, health care, social service) eager to understand the impacts of policies executed in other areas. For instance, educators, health-care providers, and social workers are seeking professional development on how parental incarceration and deportation policies affect children's schooling and physical and psychological well-being; family disruption; and family dynamics. In the USA, mass incarceration and deportation policies cast a long shadow in poor communities such that researchers, practitioners, and activists need to strategically consider the cross-sector impacts of neoliberal policies.

Like researchers and practitioners, organizers and advocates are also beginning to reconceptualize their work to attend to the ways in which single issue human rights campaigns are related intimately and strategically to other campaigns, e.g., families fighting for educational justice in their communities are beginning to forge alliances with incarcerated adults agitating for education in prison; immigrant rights organizations are beginning to work in solidarity with labor rights groups; and teachers unions, families, and youth are working together to fight the closing of public schools. In each instance, organizers and progressive think tank interrogate and document how a single public policy, e.g., school

closing or the placement of armed police officers in schools, circuits across communities to dispossess many while privileging a few. Then, working in collaboration often with researchers and other activists, these organizers recognize that solidarity across affected groups is far more compelling than resistance by individual groups likely to be set up in competition for scarce resources.

Future Directions

Inspired by Arab Spring, Madison Wisconsin, the indigenistas in Spain and protestors in Greece, and the global eruptions of OCCUPY, there is a rush of projects on circuits of protest, solidarity, and sustainability. These projects unleash the next generation of circuits research and action, focusing upon the role of social media, public protests, radical political music, the Internet, transportation systems, the occupation of public space, and discourses as technologies that circuit outrage, solidarity and a radical imagination for justice that travels, and remixes, over time and place.

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Online Resources

- Black Youth Project: <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/>
- The Equality Trust: www.equalitytrust.org.uk/
- Public Science Project: www.publicscienceproject.org
- Wellesley institute, Toronto: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/publication/local-collaborations-to-advance-health-equity/>

Cissexism

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Introduction

Cissexism is discrimination against individuals who identify with and/or present as a different sex and gender than assigned at birth and privilege conveyed on individuals who identify with and/or present as the same sex and gender as assigned at birth. It is a form of sexism based on sexual and gender identity and expression. The term was developed by LGBT activists and critics during the 1990s, as a response to oppressive attitudes in various institutions and organizations. Cissexism is the outcome of a belief that biological sex and gender fall into only two categories in a fixed and binary system: male/masculine and female/feminine. Following from this construction, cissexism represents individuals who identify with their birth sex and gender – cissexual and cisgender individuals – as normal and healthy, while those who do not identify as such are represented as deviant and sick. Cissexism polices the boundaries of sex and gender for individuals who are transsexual, transgender, intersex, gender queer, or gender variant; however, cissexism acts to limit all sex and gender identities.

Definition

Cissexism is a variation on the word sexism, similar to heterosexism (see also “► [Heteronormativity](#)”), and is closely related to the terms cissexual and cisgender. It is also closely related to the term transphobia, the fear or hatred of and discrimination against transsexual or transgender individuals. Cissexism defines a form of discrimination distinctly different from sexism or homophobia because of cissexism within feminist or queer movements. Where critical analysis

of sexism examines assumptions about and construction of gender based on biological sex, critical analysis of cissexism examines assumptions about and construction of biological sex, examines the connections and ruptures between sex and gender identities, and undermines assumptions regarding sex on which gender analysis often relies.

The term has no clear origin (see also “► [Queer Theory](#)” and “► [LGBTQ Psychology](#)”) (Koyama, 2002). Julia Serano defines it in her 1997 book *Whipping girl: A transsexual woman on sexism and the scapegoating of femininity*. The word “cis” indicates “sameness” of sex/gender identity and assigned sex/gender and acts as an antonym to “trans” which indicates “difference” between sex and/or gender identity and assigned sex and/or gender. The term disrupts the understanding that sex and gender are fixed and binary identities and draws attention to the performativity inherent in gender (Butler, 1990). It identifies “cis” individuals on a continuum with “trans” individuals and thus seeks to disrupt the belief that cissexual or cisgender individuals are normal and healthy as opposed to transsexual or transgender individuals who are represented as deviant and sick.

Negative attitudes and discrimination based on cissexism operate at individual and institutional levels and range from violence against trans* persons – commonly shortened to trans* to reflect the variety of identities within this category – to refusing to use a person’s preferred gender pronoun or name (Grollman, 2012). This discrimination acts to regulate cisgender behavior as well, by demonstrating the negative outcomes of failing to conform to socially accepted sex and gender norms. Examples of more subtle cissexism which affect everyone include listing “female” and “male” as the only two sexes on official forms or public bathrooms forcing the selection of one and only one category (Killermann, 2012). Cissexism includes discrimination against non-gender conforming persons, and terms used in this branch of queer theory include gender queer, individuals who may identify with their assigned sex and gender but do not present their sex and/or gender based

on social norms, or gender variant, individuals who identify as neither male nor female.

Keywords

Androcentrism; cisgender; cissexism; cissexual; classism; disorders of sex development; DSM; ethnocentrism; femininity; feminism; gender; gender queer; gender variant; heteronormative; heterosexism; hijra; intersex; LGBTQ psychology; masculinity; non-trans; pathologization; queer theory; racism; sex/gender differences; sexism; trans*; transphobia; transsexualism; transgender; two spirited

Critical Debates

The term and concept of cissexism was developed by LGBT activists and critics in the 1990s and is gaining more widespread recognition in the 2010s. As such, traditional debates on cissexism arise with regard to debates on transgender, transsexualism, queer theory, and LGBTQ psychology.

Serano (2007) defines cissexism on a continuum of sexism which devalues femininity. She argues that just as girls and women are devalued under sexism, trans* women and men are devalued under cissexism. Furthermore, transwomen face the most substantial discrimination due to the stricter regulations on male and masculine sex and gender identity. She identifies transphobia within the feminist movement, as well as internalized misogyny represented in the dismissal or devaluation of feminine characteristics. Kristen Schilt (2010) argues that transmen conversely gain access to male privilege.

Leslie Feinberg (1998), Richard Juang (2006), and Dean Spade (2006) investigate how cissexism mutually influences other forms of discrimination such as sexism, heterosexism, classism, racism, and ableism, whereby the norm – in this case cissexual or cisgender – acts as the marker from which difference is evaluated. Internationally, cissexism mutually influences eurocentrism, under which “third sex” or “third gender” communities such as hijra in South

Asia (Reddy, 2005) or two spirited in North America (Cameron, 2005) are not recognized as legitimate.

Trans* identity is commonly expressed in terms of a gender identity that differs from one's biological sex. However, critical theory argues that even sex is assigned at (or before) birth, drawing on evidence that as many as 2 % of infants diverge from ideal female or male sex characteristics or more invisibly diverge from XX or XY chromosomes (Blackless et al., 2000; Schneider et al., 2006). In many cases of visibly intersex births – hermaphrodite is a term in disuse because of associated stigma – infants are assigned either female or male sex and prescribed surgery and hormone treatments. Critics of this practice note that aesthetic genital surgeries are never medically necessary (Kessler, 1990). Furthermore, the practice selects a sex for an infant without their consent and despite the fact that the child might choose a different sex or gender as they develop, particularly at adolescence. This criticism seeks to draw attention to the rigid binary definitions of sex and gender into which all individuals are categorized. While several organizations, including the American Psychological Association, use the term Disorders of Sex Development or DSD (Lee, Houk, Ahmed, & Hughes, 2006) instead of intersex, intersex individuals and supporters contest the category of disorder, disease, or disability. Elizabeth Reis (2007) suggests the term Divergence of Sex Development.

Attention to cissexism attempts to de-pathologize and destigmatize trans* identities in response to the diagnosis of gender dysphoria listed in the DSM-IV. Through contesting sex and gender binaries, it also complicates questions of legal requirement or personal desire for trans* persons to pursue surgical sex reassignment (Scott-Dixon, 2009). While the term cissexism challenges the pathologization of trans* persons, inclusion of gender dysphoria in the ► DSM has also enabled trans* persons to benefit from insurance coverage if they choose hormone treatments and surgery.

Since the term cissexism is relatively new, its use varies. Some support bringing it into popular vocabulary as a means of situating cissexual or

cisgender identity as one variation among many. Others prefer to center trans identity using the terms “non-trans” and transphobia, as a means of disrupting unacknowledged assumptions about sex and gender (Scott-Dixon, 2009).

The term cissexism is gaining increasing recognition as another aspect of the intersectional oppressions of sex and gender. At the same time, this field is still developing. Many of the conversations about this term are occurring in online LGBT communities.

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Online Resources

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Citizenship, Overview

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Introduction

Citizenship has been understood to involve at least four dimensions: legal status, rights, political activity, and a form of collective identity or solidarity (Bosniak, 2000). This last dimension of identity or solidarity is the most overtly psychological of the dimensions as it refers to affective ties of identification with other citizens, cognitive perceptions of recognition and belonging, and has been that most studied within psychology. The dimensions of political activity, legal status, and rights may be impacted by the identity/solidarity dimension as citizenship participation often extends from our levels of citizen sentiment and rights and status often extend from our ability to be recognized as a legitimate citizen by others.

Citizenship has implications for understanding who can enact rights to use public space or engage in public discourse, who is included in representations of national identity, and can impact behavior through the radicalization of excluded groups as well as encourage struggles for inclusionary justice.

Definition

Citizenship denotes membership in some polity and often connotes the constellation of rights and responsibilities associated with that membership. Citizenship is often thought of as relating to the nation, but is not necessarily so. The concept of citizenship originally referred to the elite members of Greek cities who were deemed competent to engage in legal and military governance (Berlant, 2007) and can be used to refer to membership in other forms of groups and communities. This can be seen in conceptions of “global citizenship,” “environmental citizenship,” and “organizational citizenship.”

Keywords

Belonging; intragroup relations; intergroup relations; community; social identity; nation; collective identity; nationalism

Traditional Debates

Debates within the traditional literature on citizenship in psychology have often revolved around the question of whether citizenship should be seen as a status or a practice. Traditional psychological research that conceptualizes citizenship as a status has often focused on differences between citizens’ affects, cognitions, and behaviors relating to their citizenship status, measuring things such as feelings of civic duty, perceptions of the fairness of public policies, or income tax compliance (Tyler, Rasinksi, & Griffin, 1986).

Stretching back to the earliest conceptualizations of citizenship in psychology (Johnston, 1927), some psychological models of the concept have moved away from status-based understandings of citizenship prevalent in other fields. Citizenship as a practice is seen as something people do, often attending to how they enact the role of citizen by taking part in public debate, voting, and contributing to their community. Within the view of citizenship as practice, further distinctions have been made between political and civic participation, levels of commitment and effort in participation, and private helping behavior participation and public community-based participation, as well as between conventional political participation and nonconventional disruptive political participation (Haste, 2004).

Common across these two strands of traditional psychological work, however, is the assumption of a coherent and stable shared understanding of who citizens are – often taking legal citizenship status as a marker for citizenship writ large and ignoring important distinctions in who is allowed to have citizen status or participate in citizenship practices.

Critical Debates

Much critical psychological work around the concept of citizenship has focused on how membership in the category is discursively constructed to include or exclude different groups of people (Condor, 2011; Gibson, 2011). Following the understanding that the different aspects of citizenship do not necessarily come as a unitary package, critical discursive and rhetorical analyses of the construction of citizenship have variously focused on how legal citizens may not be socially recognized as belonging or how the discursive construction of threat and value may impact who is included in juridical definitions of citizenship to begin with.

Work related to citizenship in critical psychology has also documented the ways in which migration, hyphenated identities, and activism surrounding those excluded from citizenship has challenged traditional psychological notions of

identity more broadly, as records of the ways in which discursive constructions of citizenship are lived out in material space has shown the complexity and heterogeneity of social categories such as that of citizen (Callaghan & Capdevila, 2008; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Postcolonial psychology (Macleod & Bhatia, 2007) reminds us as that nations are not stable categories either and the construction of the polities to which citizens are related are often embedded within the violent processes of colonialism. Postcolonial theory's attention to the genealogical study of location and representation is an invaluable tool to the critical psychological study of citizenship, emphasizing the historicity of citizen or alien subject positions and the ways in which diaspora and the slippery assemblage of citizenship's dimensions apply differentially to bodies across space and time.

Furthermore, citizenship from a critical psychological perspective may itself be seen as an oppressive construct in the sense that in almost every conceptualization, it presupposes the exclusion of others. Future research in critical psychology around citizenship may focus on articulations of citizenship that move beyond the nation to more liberatory conceptions of the rights and responsibilities of polity membership. Critical psychological studies of the movements of undocumented activists, asylum seekers, and queer communities may point the way to more broadly inclusive conceptions of citizenship that rely less on insider/outsiderness to construct the citizen.

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Online Resources

The University of Winchester's "New Social Psychology of Citizenship" seminar website has an informative introduction to the concept from a psychological perspective.

Class

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Introduction

Class is a fundamental component of daily life because it impacts human development, functioning, and well-being (American Psychological Association, 2007). As such, a variety of fields explore aspects of class including sociology, political science, and economics. Despite the essential nature of class to daily life, however, psychologists have not explored it with as much intensity as they have with other core dimensions of human experience (e.g., gender, race). Yet, psychologists have important theoretical and empirical knowledge that can add to the existing interdisciplinary work on class. As such, psychologists can positively impact human experience through their practice, teaching, and research on class issues.

Definition

Views about the nature of class are complex, and psychologists operationalize class using an impressive variety (and combination) of measures (Liu et al., 2004). Nevertheless, there are three main ways that researchers have traditionally defined class: as one's relationship to the means of production, as access to (social or material) resources, and as subjective experience or consciousness. Bringing these ideas together, social class can be defined most accurately as a status hierarchy that includes both objective measures and subjective understandings of prestige and power within a given society. Thus, social class is the intersection between the economic, political, social, and physical conditions of a society's status hierarchy and the psychological experience of that position.

Keywords

Socioeconomic status; social class; power relations; inequality; cultural capital; diversity; social determinants of health; disadvantaged; deprivation; poverty; unemployment; homelessness; welfare

History

Traditionally, academic research in general, and psychology in particular, focuses on individuals who are most like them (e.g., male, white) and is less concerned with other groups (e.g., women, people of color). In the same vein, psychologists are generally concerned only with middle-class standpoints, and they are not very active in researching class. For instance, although most psychological research worldwide includes the gender and race of its participants, researchers rarely indicate the class of their participants – unless class is a specific focus of the research. Similarly, researchers across the globe continue to draw primarily on college student samples. Although there are students from diverse backgrounds in college settings, on the whole,

psychologists do not examine community samples (of low-income or wealthy individuals) to determine when and how college students compare to other samples.

Psychologists are steadily incorporating diversity into their teaching and practice, but here, too, class is often ignored. In the United States, two examples of this are the American Psychological Association's (APA) booklet *Toward an Inclusive Psychology: Infusing the Introductory Psychology Textbook with Diversity Content* published in 1994 and the *Final Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Enhancing Diversity* published in 2005. Although both sources include the topics of gender, race, age, sexuality, and disability, neither includes resources or recommendations for class. Similarly, within the American psychological community, attention to class issues is generally concentrated in only a few divisions of the APA (e.g., Division 9 – The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues; Division 27 – Society for Community Research and Action; Division 35 – Psychology of Women).

In contrast, psychologists outside the USA have been concerned with social class for many years. For example, Marxist theory in Europe (Marx & Engels, 1848) and Liberation Theology in Latin America (Freire, 1970) are both clearly useful for analyses of social class. Yet, even in the regions where research on social class is more plentiful, there remains much less attention to class in these countries than to other group memberships (e.g., national, religious, or ethnic identities).

Despite the fact that examinations of class are not as common as other categories, several important milestones indicate that this may be changing. In the last decade, a number of calls for increased research on class were made (e.g., see Lott & Bullock, 2007; Williams, 2009), and several special journal issues on class were published (e.g., see Lott & Bullock, 2001; Ostrove & Cole, 2003). In the United States in particular, the APA adopted a "Resolution on Poverty and Socioeconomic Status" which calls for increased research on poverty (APA, 2000), and the APA also established the Office on

Socioeconomic Status which is charged with ensuring that psychologists are aware of class issues.

Traditional Debates

Researchers have typically disagreed on the definition of social class. One common definition of social class is based on a Marxist approach where individuals are grouped based on their relationship to the means of production. The bourgeoisie are those individuals who own the means of production and purchase the labor of others, whereas the proletariat are individuals who sell their labor. For example, the factory owner is considered part of the bourgeoisie, whereas the factory worker is in the proletariat. A third group can also be included in this typology – the petite bourgeoisie – those who can buy the labor of others, but who either must work alongside their workers or who do not control a major share of the means of production.

Related to the idea of using capital to define social class, another approach is to see class as a measure of an individual's cultural capital. Cultural capital is defined as access to resources through one's social networks. Those who have access to social capital are placed in a higher class than those who do not. For example, a high school student whose parents are well connected within their community is placed in a higher class (because of the potential for social networks to help her obtain a job) than a teen whose parents are not well connected.

Other researchers focus on the socioeconomic factors that indicate access to resources – like income, education level, and occupation. Although each factor makes quantifying social class easy, the use of such different measures also illustrates the complexity of studying class from this perspective. For instance, college students often have higher educational levels but lower income levels than skilled laborers. If only one of these variables is used, one individual will be classified as in a lower class than the other and vice versa. To deal with this issue, researchers using access to material resources to

define class often utilize a combination of factors (e.g., income, education, and occupation) to calculate an individual's socioeconomic class.

Finally, because objective indicators do not capture how individuals view themselves, some researchers define class using individuals' subjective assessment of their class. This allows researchers to more fully capture how class is understood by individuals' themselves. Research finds that, despite being rooted in individual perceptions (and thus subject to individual bias), subjective estimations have predictive utility. For example, individuals' perceptions of their class predict their health better than more objective socioeconomic measures like income (e.g., Operario, Adler, & Williams, 2004). Subjective criteria include not only individuals' perceptions of their own position but also how they perceive their position in relation to others – their class consciousness.

On the surface, these traditional definitions of class appear to be in opposition to one another. What they actually illustrate, however, is the difference between *identification with* a group and *categorization in* a group as well as the difference between how *outsiders view* class standing and how *insiders experience* it. Thus, what appears to be contradictory definitions at first glance actually provides researchers with a more complete definition of social class when viewed through a critical framework.

Critical Debates

When using a critical lens to examine the psychological literature on social class, three main issues are apparent. First, in order to have a full theoretical understanding of class, researchers must go beyond access to resources and subjective estimations to examine the structure in which groups are located. In most societies, class exists within a structure that confers privilege to those at the top and maintains the lower status of those at the bottom. A growing body of literature demonstrates how structures (e.g., institutions like schools and government policies like the tax code) combine with dominant ideologies

(e.g., the American Dream) to create and maintain inequality. Without a theoretical analysis of the hierarchical structure that reifies the connections between privilege, power, and wealth, psychologists will be unable to create interventions that result in lasting change. For example, in the United States, the myth of the “American Dream” discourages class from being studied because there is no analysis of the power structure in which individuals are situated. In fact, the few individuals who achieve a higher class are often highlighted by the media. Yet, the fact that relatively little economic mobility exists because of significant structural barriers is rarely emphasized (Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001). Similarly, public policies in many countries – especially social welfare and tax policies – are structured in ways that specifically block economic advancement for those at the bottom and confer rewards to those already at the top. Without a structural analysis of power, psychologists will never have a full picture of social class.

Second, psychologist will need to use a variety of methodological approaches in order to examine social class. Although positivist and quantitative research is important in establishing the cause and effect of various factors (e.g., the effect of income on level of education), qualitative and situated analyses are also necessary to gain a full understanding of social class. For example, despite which definition they use, researchers typically divide people into three classes: low, middle, and high. Although this is useful for running statistical analyses, it is problematic for capturing nuances between the groups. For instance, because the cost of living varies widely across different locations, making \$40,000 in a small town can be classified in the “middle” category, whereas that same income in a large city is likely to be classified in the “low” category. Similarly, a disabled engineer can be classified as being in the “low” category because she has little income and is not able to return to her occupation. Yet, it is likely that because of her education and former standing, others might identify her as being in the “middle” category. As such, methodologies that highlight individuals’

subjective meanings and psychological experience can complement knowledge gained through positivist and quantitative approaches (Brydon-Miller & Tolman, 2001). In addition, research that includes participants throughout the research process (e.g., Participant Action Research) allows researchers’ perspectives and assumptions to be affirmed or challenged. Studies employing critical methodologies are vital to the study of social class because they not only minimize the likelihood that participants will be further stigmatized by psychological research but they also improve the validity of the research conclusions (Fine & Burns, 2003). Finally, diverse methodologies make it easier to examine the interconnections between social class and other related variables (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, and nationality). Thus, researchers need to think more broadly than either positivist designs or qualitative explorations alone. Ideally, research on social class would include the strengths of multiple approaches to examine both the objective consequences and the subjective experience of social class more fully.

Third, psychology as a discipline has become distanced from other related disciplines that are also investigating social class. By looking across disciplines, psychology can both enrich – and be enriched by – the theory and methods of related fields like sociology, political science, and economics. This is particularly true when including an analysis of power since sociology and political science have examinations of structure and power at the core of their discipline. In turn, psychology’s focus on both the interpersonal level of analysis and the scientific method can bring insight to the study of the psychological consequences of social class standing.

International Relevance

Countries vary in their degree of social mobility. Some are “open” to economic advancement and as a consequence have policies to foster equality, whereas others are “closed” (such as caste systems) and have policies that justify existing

inequalities. Finally, some (like the United States) appear “open” but are more “closed” than most are aware (Scott & Leonhardt, 2005). Because a growing body of literature finds that inequality within – and between – societies can powerfully affect health (Marmont, 2005), it is imperative that psychologist become more involved in examining the consequences of social class inequities. For instance, in 2012, 1.4 billion people worldwide live on less than \$1.25 a day, one in four children under the age of 5 is underweight in the developing world, and an additional 64 million people are expected to be pushed into extreme poverty across the globe because of the economic crisis. Moreover, across countries, child mortality is not only highest in the poorest households, but it decreases steadily as the income of the household increases.

As a result, a number of organizations have taken on the challenge of alleviating world poverty (e.g., the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals). There is a growing consensus about the role of power and resources to affect physical health outcomes, but there is less information about the social determinants of mental health outcomes. Psychologists, in particular, have much to contribute to the discussion of both physical and mental health. Because much of this international work occurs in interdisciplinary teams, however, it will require that psychologists work more concertedly on the issue of class and in concert with researchers in other disciplines to share their knowledge.

Practice Relevance

Despite increasing emphasis on multicultural competency in which practitioners are expected to learn and appreciate the cultures of different groups, not enough is known about how social class affects psychological functioning and mental health. In particular, there is little attention to class in diagnosis or in how mental health is impacted by structural or economic issues (Bullcock, 2004). Moreover, like other areas of psychology, most clinical work is based on the experience of middle-class individuals, and the

majority of practitioners are from middle-class backgrounds. Nevertheless, by incorporating awareness of (one’s own and one’s clients’) class into therapy, practitioners will be able to better help those they serve throughout the world.

Future Directions

The inclusion of class into psychologists’ teaching, research, and advocacy can yield important insights as well as solutions. Although class is rarely included in psychology teaching materials, by teaching about the importance of class to human experience, psychologists have the opportunity both to educate future psychologists and to validate the experience of their students. An excellent resource to help psychologists incorporate class into their classrooms is the 2008 APA Taskforce Report on “*Resources for the Inclusion of Social Class in Psychology Curricula*.” The Report features materials that foster awareness of class privilege, and it includes classroom exercises, fiction, film, television, music, and websites. Another interesting international resource are maps available through Worldmapper.org in which aspects of human life (e.g., undernourishment, poverty, disease prevalence) are depicted by resizing the countries based on how much (or how little) of the aspect they have.

There is a vital need for primary research on class, and psychology as a field has much to offer. A full exploration of class will include attention to the micro (individual), meso (interpersonal), and macro (structural) levels of an analysis. Consistent with emerging definitions of class, these analyses should attend to material and structural factors, perceptions of relative status and inequality, as well as the reproduction of power and privilege. In particular, insight into the psychological understandings and experiences of class as well as the antecedents and consequences of class inequality is necessary. This is particularly true for research on wealth. While research examining poverty and inequality is increasing, there remains a dearth of work on the psychology of wealth and privilege. By conducting this research, psychologists will be in a distinctive

position to use their knowledge to guide practitioners and policy makers in ameliorating the causes and effects of inequality.

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Online Resources

- American Psychological Association Office on Socioeconomic Status: <http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/index.aspx>
- Center on Budget Policy and Priorities: <http://www.cbpp.org/>
- Coalition on Human Needs: <http://www.chn.org/>
- National Policy Research Centers: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PovertyCenters/index.shtml>
- New York Times “Class Matters” Series: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/class/>
- Pew Charitable Trusts Economic Mobility Project: <http://www.pewstates.org/projects/economic-mobility-project-328061>
- RAND Europe: <http://www.rand.org/randeurope.html>
- United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- United States Census Bureau Data. (2011): <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf>
- Worldmapper: <http://www.worldmapper.org/>

Classism

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Introduction

Classism refers to discrimination against an individual or a group on the basis of social class. Despite a long history of classism in many of the world’s cultures, psychologists have not given much attention to this form of discrimination until relatively recently. Current scholarship and practice includes documentation of classism and its effects, critical analyses that situate classism within power relations, and proposals for incorporating class awareness into clinicians’

training and practice. Although psychologists have a long way to go to make the study of classism as integral to psychology as the study of other “-isms” (e.g., sexism, racism), there is a growing awareness of its importance.

Definition

The term “classism” is typically used to describe discrimination against low-income groups or individuals, but can also be applied to discrimination against those with moderate or high incomes (see “[Critical Debates](#)” below for more on this point). Classism can take a variety of forms and can be perpetrated by both individuals and institutions (see Lott, 2002, for a comprehensive review). Interpersonal discrimination often takes the form of psychological distancing, whereas institutional discrimination often takes the form of physical distancing.

Psychological distancing can occur in three ways. First, psychological distancing occurs when people *ignore the issue of social class*. For example, many middle-class and upper-class individuals in the USA lack familiarity with low-income people’s lived experiences; often, the groups live in separate spaces and work in different locations, and their children go to different schools. This can lead to the mistaken impression that “social class doesn’t matter very much.” Second, psychological distancing can occur when people *ignore, demean, or discount others based on their social class*. For example, individuals who rely on public benefits commonly report that encounters with welfare office workers are humiliating and discouraging; they feel belittled and talked down to by caseworkers and social service providers. Third, social distancing occurs through *lack of identification with one’s own social class*. This distancing can result from internalized classism, when lower-income individuals accept classist attitudes as generally valid even if not true of themselves.

These kinds of psychological distancing are reinforced by the physical distancing that often occurs as a result of institutional classism.

Low-income people experience institutional discrimination in employment, education, housing, health care, and legal systems in many countries. Access to public goods and services can be more difficult at lower incomes, and those with higher incomes may be able to choose a better level of service. In the USA, for instance, the advantages offered by public schools in higher-income districts versus lower-income districts are well documented and perpetuated by a funding system based partly on local property taxes. As another example, anti-vagrancy laws (also known as “sleeping bans”) that forbid resting or sleeping in public areas disproportionately impact people who are homeless and have nowhere else to go.

Keywords

Discrimination; behavior; oppression; power relations, social distance; class privilege; class; stigmatization; cultural competency; inequality; internalized oppression; poverty; prejudice; stereotypes

History

There is a long history of negative affect, behavior, and cognition being directed against low-income people (see Piven & Cloward, 1971 for a detailed discussion). For example, in fifteenth-century Europe, the magistrates of Basel created 25 categories of, and punishments for, beggars. In the early sixteenth century, the Elizabethan Poor Laws codified classism into the legal system. The roots of many classist modern relief policies can be found in the Elizabethan Poor Laws; these laws made being poor a crime, allowed midnight raids of poor households to look for signs of immorality, and did not allow those receiving relief to use it at taverns.

Despite evidence of a long history of interpersonal and institutional classism, the topic is less explored in the psychological literature than are other forms of discrimination (e.g., racism, sexism). This by itself is an example of the psychological distancing discussed above. Academia is

predominantly a middle-class space, and psychologists have been concerned with primarily middle-class standpoints. As a result, most psychological research is conducted from the perspective of the “nonpoor.” In addition, many researchers continue to draw primarily on college student samples, in which middle- and upper-income individuals are overrepresented. On the whole, this has left the perspectives and experiences of lower-income individuals understudied.

Increasingly, however, social class and its implications are receiving more attention. In the past decade, a number of special journal issues on poverty were published (e.g., Lott & Bullock, 2001), the American Psychological Association (APA) published “Resources for the Inclusion of Social Class in Psychology Curricula” (APA, 2008), and a number of scholars called for greater attention to social class in research and practice (e.g., Smith, 2008; Williams, 2009).

Traditional Debates

Most research on prejudice and discrimination in psychology is based on the three-part approach to attitudes. In this framework, attitudes are composed of the ABC’s: affect, behavior, and cognition. Affect describes how one feels about the attitude object, behavior describes how one acts toward the attitude object, and cognition describes how one thinks about the attitude object. Using this model to describe unjustified negative attitudes toward an individual or a group, prejudice is the affective component, discrimination is the behavioral component, and stereotypes are the cognitive component. Classism, as a form of discrimination, is thus the behavioral component of classist attitudes.

A growing body of research is documenting various aspects of classism. Some investigators focus on how study participants treat low-income versus middle-income individuals. This work often takes a quantitative approach using experimental methods (e.g., by having participants make hypothetical decisions about whether to hire either low- or middle-income job applicants). Other researchers document the

experience of classism from the perspective of working-class or low-income individuals; much of this work takes a feminist approach and uses participatory and qualitative methods (e.g., Fine & Weis, 1998). In general, however, research on classism focuses more on interpersonal discrimination than institutional discrimination. This emphasis likely results from the difficulty of documenting the disparate effects of institutional policies as well as psychology’s preference for interpersonal levels of analysis.

A well-documented aspect of classism is the distinction that observers often make between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor. Those in the “deserving” category have traditionally included the disabled and the elderly (especially Whites), whereas single mothers and able-bodied working-age adults (especially people of color) are often considered “undeserving” of assistance. These beliefs influence behavior in the form of support for social policies that grant aid to those who are “deserving” of help (e.g., senior citizens) and withhold it from those deemed “undeserving” (e.g., working-age single mothers).

Educational settings have also been a popular context for research on class and classism. Researchers in the USA and England have explored how social class and experiences of classism impact students’ choices about, and experiences of, higher education. For example, feelings of belonging, some of which are influenced by class similarities and differences, play a key role in student satisfaction, persistence, and degree completion (Ostrove & Long, 2007). At the primary and secondary levels, researchers have documented teachers’ and principals’ classist discrimination against low-income parents.

Finally, the work of some scholars is rooted in a more explicitly Marxist perspective of social class that includes consideration of individuals’ social position and relation to the means of production. Højrup’s (2003) framework distinguishes conceptual life-modes that describe self-employed workers, wage earners, and career professionals. These differing life-modes influence individuals’ beliefs about the meaning and

purpose of work, which can result in derogatory beliefs about individuals in other life-modes. For instance, Højrup posits that individuals in the self-employed life-mode highly value their work as a meaningful and, more importantly, an independent pursuit. Workers in this life-mode may therefore view the work of career professionals and wage earners as of lesser value because the work is dependent on the aims and instructions of employers.

Critical Debates

From a critical point of view, the next step in expanding psychological work on classism is to look at how classism functions in relation to wider social systems. For whom is classism beneficial? How? Where do classist ideas and beliefs originate? How are they maintained across time and reproduced in new contexts?

A critical approach to classism includes a focus on power relations and the functions that classism and classist attitudes serve in perpetuating economic inequality. From this perspective, classism is a form of oppression, and the term refers specifically to discrimination against lower-income individuals or groups with the understanding that classism contributes to maintaining systems of class privilege. Critical scholars therefore do not use the term “classism” to refer to discrimination against higher-income individuals or groups because people with higher incomes are not oppressed by such discrimination.

Critical perspectives do not assume or imply that individuals are intentionally classist or that lawmakers consciously create policies with the intention of harming low-income families. However, when classist attitudes are widely accepted as true, individual acts of classism seem natural or unremarkable and policies that discriminate against those with fewer resources become easy to justify on moral or “logical” grounds.

For example, psychologists in the USA have documented that individualistic explanations for poverty (e.g., laziness) are associated with

a preference for welfare policies that include work requirements (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2003). When lawmakers rely on such classist stereotypes as a basis for creating public assistance policies, the resulting programs can impose unrealistic requirements on those seeking aid. “Work-first” policies end up disconnected from the realities of the job market and from low-income women’s need for supports such as transportation and child care. At the same time, the focus on changing recipients’ behavior deflects attention from structural inequalities (e.g., unequal access to quality education) and disparities in income and wealth that impede upward mobility.

International Relevance

Classism exists around the world in various forms. Caste systems, for instance, usually include an element of social class and were historically present in many countries; some continue to the present day. It is estimated that worldwide, 250 million people are discriminated against on the basis of caste (UNICEF, 2011). Even in the absence of formal caste systems, sizeable percentages of many countries’ populations suffer from interpersonal and institutional discrimination as a result of living in poverty. Residents of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, for instance, have fought for decades for better access to public services and integration with the city. Likewise, China’s government relocated thousands of migrant and homeless residents of Beijing in advance of that city’s hosting of the 2008 Olympics. In countries around the world, those with fewer material resources consistently have fewer rights and less access to official power channels.

These same dynamics can also be seen at the level of nations. For instance, the World Bank is an international organization that provides loans and grants to middle- and low-income countries to promote development and reduce poverty. Although there are 187 member countries in the organization, the five largest shareholders (France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom,

and the United States) have disproportionate authority over the Bank's operations and policies. Critics have objected to the conditions that the World Bank places on its financial assistance, which often encourage deregulation, privatization, and freer trade policies in borrower countries. The concern is that these conditions limit the ability of poorer countries to decide for themselves on the most socially just and economically sustainable strategies for economic development (Toussaint, 2006).

Practice Relevance

The practical relevance of classism is recognized by clinical practitioners who call for increased attention to matters of classism and social class in several areas, including individual counseling, vocational counseling, and educational settings (e.g., Liu, 2002). Theories and treatment protocols designed by and validated with middle- or upper-income individuals may or may not be equally effective for people whose backgrounds are working class or low income. In addition, counselors will be more effective if they are aware of their own biases and assumptions regarding social class, as well as their own positions in the class hierarchy and how they are viewed by clients. Progress in all of these areas could be furthered through greater inclusion of classism in multicultural training for clinicians.

Critical commentators have pointed out that conventional psychotherapies focus on changing the individual client, which may not be the most appropriate paradigm if the root of the problem lies within the client's circumstances (Marecek & Hare-Mustin, 2009). For example, the higher rates of injuries experienced by working-class and low-income workers suggest the need for better working conditions and higher safety standards. But an individual client seeking help with anxiety due to dangerous working conditions might be provided with stress-reduction techniques or encouraged to find new work. Alternative paradigms that situate psychological problems within the community context

(e.g., community psychology and psychosocial work) offer promising avenues for exploration.

Critical scholars and practitioners have also raised concerns about the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), used by US clinicians for diagnostic purposes. Low-income women are among those who are most likely to be misdiagnosed, suggesting that insufficient attention has been paid to how classist attitudes have influenced the diagnostic categories and criteria presented in the DSM, how such attitudes inform what behaviors are labeled as "dysfunctional," "problematic," or "normal," and how client and practitioner social class can influence the types of diagnoses that are made (Bullock & Truong, n.d.).

Future Directions

Given that psychological investigations of classism are at a relatively early stage, there is a great need for work in this area. For instance, research could build directly on existing knowledge about the content of classist stereotypes and the experiences of those who are targets of such stereotypes. From a critical perspective, the next step might be to examine how classist stereotypes are constructed and used by those in power in ways that subordinate less powerful groups.

Also needed are theoretical models that explain the behavior of those with class privilege. At present, there are dramatic differences in economic well-being within and between nations, with substantial percentages of the world's population unable to meet basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. What beliefs, attitudes, and experiences among those with greater resources promote acceptance of such disparity? Additional research is needed about the beliefs that are associated with accepting inequality, as well as how those beliefs influence behavior.

Another line of research could investigate resistance to interpersonal and institutional classism. Better documentation is needed of individuals and organizations who are working to counter classism and which strategies are most effective in which circumstances.

With respect to public policy, taking a critical perspective involves keeping in mind that research agendas and definitions of social problems set by policymakers or others may not be consistent with the promotion of health and welfare for all people or may be based in prejudiced beliefs about people in poverty. This is quite different from the “honest broker” model of research and evaluation that accepts programs and policies at face value. Critical perspectives also suggest that evaluations of antipoverty programs and policies include the insights and opinions of low-income beneficiaries. A good illustration of the debates around these points can be found in the 2001 issue of *Analysis of Social Issues and Public Policy*, where a number of authors discuss the appropriate position for social scientists to take vis-à-vis evaluating US welfare policies.

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Cognitive Theory

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Introduction

The emergence of cognitive theory in the 1950s was a milestone and, for some, a revolution in psychology, for it made the study of thinking and consciousness legitimate again after decades of dominance by behavioral theory. Behaviorists were concerned with the observation, measurement, and manipulation of behavior; mind and thinking were of little or no importance to them.

Interestingly, prior to behaviorism's rise in the early twentieth century most psychologists did study mental processes. Consequently, the rise of cognitive theory was thought by many to be revolutionary because it brought mind and thinking back into psychology (Bruner, 1990). No longer were humans seen as passive recipients of stimuli but as active processors of information. Using cognitive theory, psychologists began exploring how we perceive, learn, acquire, and use language; solve problems; and remember. This was seen as a major advancement over the simplistic stimulus-response relationships posited by the behaviorists; it was the recognition that we are thinking beings.

There were many and diverse influences on the development of cognitive theory. Among them was work in philosophy, linguistics, information theory, and computer science. Among the most important developments that led to cognitive theory was the recognition that computers could be programmed to simulate the processing of information (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2012). In fact, the computer became the dominant metaphor used by cognitive theorists to explain mental processes. This is important because it helped to shape what cognitive theory emphasized and in the process what it tended to overlook.

The philosophical antecedents of cognitive theory are numerous, but one philosopher stands out as having a profound effect on the assumptions made by many cognitive theorists. René Descartes (1596–1650) is often referred to as a rationalist philosopher, meaning that he focused upon the workings of the mind. After engaging in systematically doubting everything, Descartes concluded that the only thing he could be certain of was his doubting and thinking. We have clear and distinct ideas that appear to have no relation to the world. Such ideas Descartes called innate; they were integral parts of our minds (Descartes, 1637/1956). Descartes also believed that the mind, which was nonphysical, interacted with the physical body. The body was governed by physical principals, such as gravity, but the mind was not. Thus, Descartes posited the notion that humans have innate ideas and that there is a duality between mind and body. These two

ideas were to be seminal for cognitive theory. They, along with the computer metaphor, significantly directed the course cognitive theory would take and would be the source of many of the critical debates concerning it.

Definition

Orthodox cognitive theory views human beings as rational processors of information, with the units of information taking the form of mental representations (Fodor, 1980). In their landmark book, Simon and Newell (1972) wrote: "Our theory of human thinking and problem solving postulates that the human operates as an information processing system" (p. 19). Their work was aimed at constructing computer models of thinking and problem solving. Neisser (1967) described cognitive psychology in terms of storing and structuring information. We take in information about the world and other people through our senses, process that information, and respond accordingly. The information processing view suggests that our cognitive systems operate in a rule-like fashion. It also suggested that we use various strategies when we think to make us more efficient or be better able to remember (see Miller, 1956). In fact, much of the technical language used in cognitive theory was appropriated from information theory and computer technology. Thus, cognitive theorists talk about information, feedback, and programming (Richards, 2002). This made it reasonable to think that psychologists had tools and the language that would allow them to study thinking in a scientific way.

Much of early cognitive theory was based on laboratory-based experiments, employing the quantitative and experimental methods of positivist science. Such research had as its goal revealing the cognitive processes people engage in as they solve problems, remember information, perceive faces, etc. Cognitive theory held the promise of redefining human beings as processors of information. It opened the way for researchers to rigorously study mental processes using the tools of science and computer technology, enabling them to make thinking visible.

Cognitive theory continues to have a significant effect on virtually all of psychology.

Keywords

Cognitive theory; information processing; postmodernism; meaning; culture; social constructionism

Traditional Debates

Despite its great success and widespread influence, cognitive theory has received a considerable amount of criticism. Behaviorists criticize it, arguing that there is little agreement on conceptual issues and lack of coherent terminology. Importantly two of its major critics are also two of cognitive theory's architects. Neisser (1976) has criticized cognitive theory for being too focused upon laboratory research, arguing that it lacks face validity because of this; thus, its applicability to studying how people think and solve problems in real-world settings is limited at best. To overcome this, research needs to be conducted in real-world settings. Bruner (1990) has criticized cognitive theory for becoming *technicalized* (p. 4); he argues that cognitive theory has fixated on how people process information at the expense of understanding how we construct meaning. This is due, in part, to the reification of the computer metaphor. This *mechanized* view of thinking has overshadowed any study of how we impute meanings to our experiences. Mind is objectified; the subjective mind is simply seen as an epiphenomenon (Bruner, 1990). We see in this the duality between mind and body put in place by Descartes. Many cognitive theorists assume that the study of thinking need not consider the context in which the thinking is taking place. So what we have is a disembodied thinker.

Bruner (1990) also argued that cognitive theory is acultural; it has tended to overlook or de-emphasize the effects of culture on thinking. Noting that anthropologists had long ago recognized the importance of culture on behavior and

thinking, Bruner cites three reasons that culture is integral to our understanding of cognition. First is the fact we cannot escape culture; it is through our participation in culture that our mental powers are realized. Second is the notion that we are makers of meaning and this connects us to culture in integral ways because the meanings we construct come from it. Third is the idea of *folk psychology*, a culture's rendering of what makes us beings in a particular culture. As Gergen (1985) notes, the ways in which we try to understand the world are themselves the outcomes of exchanges between individuals in cultural contexts. Through a cultural lens, the notion of abstract, individual processors of information becomes a shallow and one-dimensional view of the very deep and complex set of activities we call thinking.

Critical Debates

Other critiques have come from social constructionists (Gergen, 1985; Shotter, 1997), postmodernists (Gergen, 2001), and humanists (Aanstoos, 2001). These critiques converge on the notion that we are embodied beings in the world and that our thinking is a function, not of information processing, but rather of social interaction in cultural contexts.

The critiques of social constructionists focus on the embodied and relational characteristics of thinking (Shotter, 1997). To understand cognition, we need to recognize that thinking takes place within the social interactions between individuals. The processes of our thinking cannot be reduced to computer programs or decontextualized because the very nature of these processes is social, dialogical, and constructive. Our very sense of self is constructed through our interactions with others. Much theorizing about cognition has been influenced by cultural modernism; this is reflected in the assumptions of the individual mind, the objective existence of the world, language as bearer of truth, and a focus on epistemology over ontology (Gergen, 2001). A postmodern critique of cognitive theory centers on the very social aspects of cognition. Thinking

cannot be abstracted from the contexts in which it takes place or with whom it is taking place. Our thinking and our language are the products of engagement with others in a cultural context. The ideas of normativity and universalism as assumed in cognitive theory are seen as distortions. Humanistic psychology is seen as the way to bridge research and application and to remind academic researchers of the necessity to focus on lived experience and to use methods appropriate to such study (Aanstoos, 2001).

Gergen (2009) argues that science, including psychology, is not value neutral, despite widespread belief to the contrary. By extension, Gergen argues, our day-to-day psychological functioning is filtered through our values, biases, etc. Despite cognitive psychologist's emphasis on rationality, *ideological critiques* reveal that we are anything but rational much of the time. Thus, a true understanding of cognition demands an understanding of how people emotionally construe their worlds without fearing that such construals are flawed, as is maintained by mainstream cognitive psychology (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).

Derrida (1997) suggests that Western culture inevitably places higher value on certain ideas or behaviors over others, for example, rational thinking over emotional thinking. This is but one example of a larger tendency to dichotomize. As Gergen (2009) notes, this tendency leads to suppression of groups, ways of thinking, etc. Sampson (1981) asserts that such proclivities will allow psychology to "continue uncritically to affirm existing social arrangements . . ." (p. 739). Thus, cognitive psychology is seen as portraying humans as rational processors of information at the expense of portraying them realistically in relation to their being emotionally engaged in contexts and situations (Sampson). It has become what Gergen calls totalitarian in its valorization of rationality and its implicit normativity. The troubling consequence of this has been cognitive psychology's dismissal of different ways of knowing and its focus on individual knowledge over collaboration and dialogue (Gergen).

A number of cognitive theorists over the years have recognized the shortcomings of the

dominate approaches to cognition and attempted to incorporate many of the insights from critiques of their work (see Neisser, 1976; Wilson, 1999). As Sternberg and Sternberg (2012) state, cognitive theorists are using more diverse research methods, some of which take them out of the laboratory and into real-world settings. Many of these changes can be seen in the context of education and learning, in which the ontological status of learners is recognized as having a significant effect on their epistemology (Bruner, 1996). Zajonc (1980) has argued that emotional processing precedes cognitive processing. Epstein (2003) has introduced a model of thinking called cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST), in which he postulates that humans process information in two distinct but interacting ways: experiential systems and rational systems. While the experiential system is cognitive, its basic processes are tied to emotion and effectively negotiating everyday life.

Osbeck (2009) notes that from within cognitive science itself, models have been constructed that deviate in significant ways from tradition models. These models include dynamical cognition, situated cognition, embodied cognition, extended mind theory, and integrative cognition. Importantly, these approaches utilize methods that go beyond laboratory-based experimentation to explore thinking and activity in the real world. What sets these models apart from traditional cognitive science is a focus on action, or "ontology of practice," rather than process (Osbeck, p. 30). While there are important differences among these approaches, it is what they share in common that make them vital. As embodied thinkers, we act on the world, its objects and people, just as they act on us. Without embodiment and activity thinking would barren (Wilson & Foglia, 2011).

Harré (1999) writes of a second cognitive revolution, or discursive psychology, that arose from growing dissatisfaction with the assumption of "hidden cognitive processes" (p. 47) and emphasis placed upon individual cognition and the common mechanisms responsible for thinking. Adherents of the second cognitive revolution

stress that cognition is a social and discursive act. Harré (2002) defines cognitive science as “the range of human activities” (p. 5). Importantly, as Harré notes, the stress on cognition as social and discursive reveals that there are distinct forms of human psychology, informed by culture, which undermines the assumed universality of so much cognitive theorizing. This echoes Bruner’s (1990) criticism of the acultural nature of cognition theory.

Traditional debates have tended to be self-reflexive insofar as they have focused on the epistemological underpinnings of psychology and how it can acquire more accurate knowledge (data). As important as these debates are, their self-reflexivity has kept them from larger considerations of psychology’s role, academically and clinically, in a twenty-first-century world. Critiques of psychology’s epistemology are necessary but not sufficient. Critical debates go beyond epistemology to explore the ontology of cognition and the embodied, discursive, meaning-making individual and consider the political and social relevance and utility of psychological knowledge.

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- The Culture and Cognition Lab. <http://culcog.berkeley.edu/>
- International Culture and Cognition Institute. <http://cognitionandculture.net/>
- Cognitive Cultural Studies. <http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Culture/index.html>
- Narrative Psychology: Internet and Resource Guide. <http://web.lemoyne.edu/~hevern/narpsych.html>

Collaboration

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Introduction

In an age when companies are downsizing and resources are scarce, scholars from a wide range of disciplines are becoming increasingly interested in uncovering the factors affecting successful collaboration and coalition-building. While collaborations are likely to be comprised of contributors that possess different overall goals, collaborators pool their resources to advance specific overlapping goals (Gupta, 2003). In order to work together successfully, members of collaborations must confront conflicts that arise from the endorsement of different ideologies, values, and goals of each person or group involved in the collaboration. Research has yielded models to enhance inter- and intragroup dynamics within collaborations while ensuring maximum outcome or benefit.

Definition

In the past, the terms collaboration, coalition, and team were often used synonymously within the literature on group behavior and intergroup relations; however, contemporary research provides greater insight into the varied goals and functions of each (Aamodt, 2013). Collaborations, in their many forms, are defined as a group of people in pursuit of a common and articulated goal, who pool their relevant resources, engage in shared decision making, and agree on the distribution of the payoff or benefits received via the collaborative efforts (Cook, 2002).

Keywords

Group behavior; transcommunal; social identity; intergroup relations

Traditional Debates

There are two basic approaches to studying collaborations: resource mobilization theories and theories based on group or social identification (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001). The resource mobilization approach is dependent upon assets, taking into account structural opportunities, leadership, and networks, and generally omits subjective perspectives (Bystydzienski & Schacht). Theories of social or collective identification describe the internal dynamics of collaborative social movements (Bettencourt, Dillman & Wollman, 1996). For example, when an identity is shared, there is a sense of common fate within a group which motivates action to protect group interests (Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

Most research in business and industrial-organizational psychology focus on mobilizing individual human resources (e.g., one's intellectual specialization), providing models to encourage successful team (i.e., individuals collaborating on a shared task) functioning. One model, Lombardo and Eichinger's (1995) T7 Model of Team Effectiveness, emphasizes the major factors believed to influence collaboration within and among teams: internal team factors (i.e., thrust, trust, talent, teaming skills, and task skills) and external team factors (i.e., team-leader fit and team support from the organization; De Meuse, 2009). The researchers suggests that in order to perform at their peak, any given group must maintain the five internal team factors while simultaneously receiving external support (De Meuse). In lieu of looking at the specific factors affecting collaborative efforts, the Rubin, Plovnik, and Fry (1977) GRPI Model of Team Effectiveness specifies the best way for team members to approach collaboration in order to maximize efficiency (De Meuse). Their model

suggests a specific sequence of concentration when developing collaborations; that is, group members should first define a goal and determine member roles and responsibilities prior to focusing on determining processes and ensuring positive interpersonal relationships.

Critical Debates

Engagement in collaborative endeavors typically requires a high degree of personal commitment; thus, social identity is often the driving force for engagement (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). In justice-based collaborations (i.e., coalitions pooling resources to dismantle illegitimate power structures) social identities are especially salient. Hence, collaborations across difference have often been fraught with tension or conflict based on real or imagined intergroup difference (Rosenthal & Mizrahi, 1994). This tension seems to be due in part to the fact that groups are likely to engage in intergroup comparisons that elicit competition, serving to make societal power differentials salient (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Comparisons generate an “us vs. them” mentality that highlights the difference between the groups; the salience of those group differences can interfere with intra- and intergroup functioning (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001).

In order to counteract conflict based on social identity processes, a variety of suggestions have been offered. Several researchers have argued that the development of an overarching collective identity can alleviate intergroup tension and counteract negative perceptions based on power and status (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). A contradictory approach advocates for collaborations that pay heed to group differences (Childs, 2003). For example, Childs asserts that collaborations that do not first set out to acknowledge and respect difference based on “rooted affiliations” could be subject to “artificial harmony.” In “transcommunal” collaborations differences are perceived to be the source from which alliances draw their greatest strength and

ingenuity. Disagreement between members of collaborations is best addressed via “constructive disputing,” that is, respectfully attending to and sharing divergent perspectives in order to advance the goals of the entire collaborative (Childs). A shared respect for intergroup difference allows for the articulation of dissenting opinions and the ensuing constructive discussions (Childs). This approach counteracts groupthink (Janis, 1972), which often inhibits progressive dialogue and action.

As with any prevalent issue, debates exist over the best methods to use and ways to use them. When considering approaches to organizing collaborative efforts, a leader’s personality or individual group choices might affect the approach more than anything (Aamodt, 2010). Within collaborations, challenges occur on both the interpersonal and group level. Given that group members have multiple identities and varied interests and goals, it is crucial to understand how coalition members perceive their alliances, experience tension, and respond to intergroup differences in opinion.

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Collective Identity

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Introduction

From anthropology to women's studies, identity is one of the most widely studied subjects across social science literature, resulting in its description as both "elusive and ubiquitous" (Gleason, 1983). The body of literature on identity is

varied in both approach and emphasis. Identity researchers and theorists focus on personal identities, which highlight the distinctiveness of the individual, and social identities, which emphasize common group identities (e.g., gender), relationships (e.g., parent), or social roles (e.g., activist).

Identity offers a way of thinking about the links between the personal and the social, that is, how the psychological and social aspects of the self are tied together to create a self-concept (Woodward, 2002). Identity can be seen as both a psychological and political construct; people invest in their identities and often are driven by their identities, but these identities are always socially located (Allahar, 2001). Depending upon historical and cultural values and norms, certain identities are valued more at any given time in comparison to others (Allahar). In addition, identities are supported and sustained through social networks and relationships, leading to potential disagreements regarding the criteria that different parties will use to define and describe certain identities (Allahar).

Social science researchers empirically examine the relationship between the importance, salience, or centrality of a particular identity and the various emotions, cognitions, and behaviors of people with those identities (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). For example, people's behavior in certain social situations is often predicated on whether they see themselves as a prototypical member of the group (Turner, 1985) or whether they feel a sense of belonging (Tropp & Wright, 2001), commitment (Tyler & Blader, 2001), or connection between other group members and themselves (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). Attention is often paid to individual differences, such as level of self-monitoring (Snyder, 1974) and sensitivity to rejection (Ayduk et al., 1999).

Definition

Collective identity encompasses both an individuals' self-definition and affiliation with specific groups or roles. While personal identity can be defined as a subjective sense of self based on

unique personal characteristics, collective identity refers to the way that people define themselves in relation to others and the outside world, i.e., identities that are socially influenced (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). The term collective identity is gaining popularity as a distinct term describing affiliation and a sense of connectedness to a particular social group.

Keywords

Personal identity; social identity; collective identity; multiple identities; identity theory

Traditional Debates

Identity theory has been influenced by early works of William James (1890) and Charles Horton Cooley (1902). James introduced the concept of the self as subject (i.e., the “I”) and the self as object (i.e., the “Me”), a concept further explored by George Herbert Mead (1934). Cooley (1902) expanded upon the self as subject in his conceptualization of reflected appraisals (i.e., the looking-glass self), which refers to the way that identity is developed and guided by the perceptions of others. The process of becoming aware of one’s self through reflected appraisals is a core assumption in symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionists refer to identity as the meanings or labels that one attributes to the self (Burke & Tully, 1977) and the expectations for behavior tied to those meanings and labels (Mead, 1934).

In contrast to the symbolic interactionist approach is Turner and colleagues’ Self-Categorization Theory and Social Identity Theory (Turner, 1985). This theoretical approach asserts that the self emerges from the cognitive process of engaging in social comparisons (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). According to Self-Categorization Theory, people categorize themselves in terms of “we”; therefore, social identity is more salient than personal identity in intergroup contexts, when people focus on outgroup distinctiveness and ingroup similarity (Hogg & Turner, 1987). Social Identity

Theory (SIT) was initially developed as a theory of intergroup dynamics, describing how people conceive of the status of specific groups, the legitimacy and stability of status relations, and the permeability of intergroup boundaries (Hogg & Abrams, 2001). SIT postulates that social relationships are an important component of the self-concept, that people are motivated to feel good about themselves, and that people feel better about themselves when they believe that their ingroup is somehow superior to the groups to which they do not belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to SIT, the need for self-enhancement drives people to proactively present themselves and their connections to specific social identities differently depending upon the social context (Brown, 1998). Based on the individual’s evaluation of status between groups, SIT reasons that group members will adopt the appropriate behaviors to enhance well-being (Brown). These behaviors might include disidentification with the group (e.g., attempting to pass into a higher-status group), creative ways of reevaluating one’s own group (i.e., social creativity theory), and direct intergroup competition to establish a new status structure (e.g., collective action; Hogg & Abrams, 2001).

While some identity researchers are interested in the consequences of having a particular identity, there are many who are interested in identity development. In Erik Erikson’s (1963) theory of psychosocial development, he describes the age of adolescence as one that is focused on achieving a strong sense of self, when one knows where he or she stands, accepts him or herself, and attempts to continue growing and changing. James Marcia (1966) operationalized Erikson’s theory of identity development, concluding that the movement through stages and the negotiation of the identity crisis is accomplished through four identity statuses: diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and achievement. Contemporary research continues to examine the stages of development, focusing on specific collective identities such as feminist identity development (Downing & Roush, 1985), homosexual identity development (Troiden, 1979), and ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1992).

Critical Debates

Collective identities are influenced by the political contexts in which they develop (Callero, 2003). Lorde (1984) asserts that “in a society where good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some group of people who, through systemized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior” (p. 114). Based on the fact that certain social groups are stigmatized and devalued (Goffman, 1963), collective identities are often developed in opposition to mainstream group identities. Social philosophers and theorists argue that identity development often depends upon “recognition of self through a recognition of and differentiation from others” (Leach & Brown, 1999, p. 768). The notion of recognition can be problematic because it often reifies the existing social ideology (Fraser, 1996). Acknowledging the importance of societal reactions for feelings of personal worth, scholars have become increasingly interested in the experiences and behaviors of individuals with stigmatized collective identities (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl, & Hull, 2000).

There are two opposing viewpoints within the identity literature: one that emphasizes the rigidity of social categories (i.e., essentialist approach) while the other emphasizes the fluidity of social categories (i.e., social constructionist approach). The social constructionist approach to identity emphasizes historical and cultural basis for the generation of identity categories (e.g., Omi & Winant, 1994). Such an approach reveals that social, collective, and group-based identities are dynamic and fluid and do not represent any real categories of people (Esterberg, 1997). Critiques of social constructionism claim that this approach for failing to recognize the way that identities play a role in people’s everyday lives. Empirical evidence reveals that people see themselves within actual social categories. In fact, collective action aimed at social change cannot occur without people first mobilizing around a shared identity (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990).

Most of the research in the area of identity has been conducted with one particular identity at a

time; however, there is a growing body of research examining the intersections of multiple identities (Crenshaw, 1989) or a person’s choice to identify with one particular identity over another (e.g., Pronin, Steele, & Ross, 2004). In an effort to provide a better understanding of the often overlapping, yet distinctly termed, concepts in identity theory, contemporary researchers are developing new frameworks for studying identity (Ashmore et al., 2004).

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Colonialism, Overview

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Introduction

Psychological science was conceived during the era of the European colonialism, and many of its foundational concepts still reflect the colonial

worldview. However, relatively few attempts have been made to critically reflect on the profound influence colonialism has had on psychology or on the discipline's role in advancing the colonial and neocolonial projects. Studying the impact of colonialism on psychology and the discipline's complicity with colonization and the exploitation of non-European populations, both historically and at the present time, is indispensable for advancing critical perspectives that can be used to counteract these tendencies.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (Magdoff, Nowell, & Webster, retrieved on 08/03/2012), Western colonialism was a "political-economic phenomenon whereby various European nations explored, conquered, settled, and exploited large areas of the world [. . .], spreading European institutions and culture." European colonialism spanned over a period of nearly 500 years, beginning in late fifteenth century and ending in mid-twentieth century. Over that period of time, European colonial powers, notably Spain, Portugal, France, and Britain, gradually gained control of most of the Americas, Australia, and Africa, as well as parts of Asia and the Middle East. In North America and Australia, settler colonialism was widely practiced, whereby European settlers moved into the conquered territories, displacing, dispossessing, and/or physically destroying the natives, whereas in most of the other colonized areas, the primary form of colonial practice was exploitation, such as the theft of natural resources.

Keywords

Colonialism; oppression; sociocultural evolutionism; primitive; colonial mentality; internalized oppression; exoticizing; Frantz Fanon; Ashis Nandy

Traditional Debates

Like other social sciences developed during the late colonial era – most notably anthropology – psychology in the late nineteenth to early

twentieth centuries accepted the premises of sociocultural evolutionism, i.e., the view that cultures evolved similarly to biological species and that of the entire human race, the European culture had reached the highest evolutionary stage (Brickman, 2003). Non-European cultures, within this paradigm, represented earlier primitive stages of development that Europe had already left behind and were seen as devoid of their own history. Examples of such thinking can be found in many of Freud's texts, for example, *Totem and Taboo* (2010/1918), where he argues that the mental life of "savages" presents a "well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development" (in Brickman, 2003, p. 67) and that "a comparison between the psychology of primitive peoples, as it is taught by social anthropology, and a psychology of neurotics, as it has been revealed by psychoanalysis, will be bound to show numerous points of agreement" (in Brickman, p. 67). Other pioneers of psychological science, including Francis Galton, Herbert Spencer, and G. Stanley Hall, likewise helped construct representations of the non-Western others as inferior and primitive (Bhatia, 2002, in Okazaki, David, & Abelmann, 2008). Such representations served to rationalize and justify oppression and exploitation of native peoples, who were seen as too underdeveloped for self-governance, by European colonists, who ostensibly bestowed upon them the benefits of civilization (Said, 1979).

Colonial conquests in many parts of the world involved large-scale violence against native populations, including genocides, mass slavery, and forced displacements of local populations. Although it is well known that mass violence increases the incidence of psychological distress and psychopathology in those subjected to it, psychologists have kept silent about the mental health costs to the colonized of the abuses that they and their families had endured. Moreover, along with psychiatry, psychology has been complicit in ascribing manifestations of maladjustment and psychopathology in native populations to their assumed inherent inferiority, rather than the traumatogenic effects of the colonists' violent actions (Kleinman, 1988). Psychiatrist and anticolonial activist Frantz Fanon (1963)

reported that colonial mental health experts described North African natives' expressions of distress and maladjustment, including lack of energy, lying, and violent crimes, not as posttraumatic reactions, attempts to survive in subhuman conditions, or depressive symptoms but rather as expressions of their biological inferiority. Some, in fact, went so far as to claim that a North African had no frontal lobe and was essentially a "lobotomized European" (Carothers, in Fanon).

Critical Debates

Critical researchers concerned with studying and documenting the psychological effects of colonization on colonized populations have emphasized such effects as "colonial mentality" and "internalized oppression" (Okazaki et al., 2008). Both terms refer to negative cultural identities among individuals from colonized or formerly colonized groups, which translate into uncritical rejection of the native culture alongside the equally uncritical acceptance of the white/Western culture and lead to low self-esteem and self-hatred among the group members (Okazaki et al.). For example, the widespread use of skin-whitening products, superior perceptions of whites, and whiteness and high rates of depression among Filipino Americans have all been linked to the colonial mentality within this community (Bergano & Bergano-Kinney, 1997; Revilla, 1997; Tompar-Tiu & Sustento-Seneriches, 1995, in Okazaki et al., 2008). According to clinical psychologist and cultural critic Ashis Nandy, colonial oppression has damaged the very subjectivity of the colonized, as well as precluded the possibilities of intersubjective exchange between the colonizers and the colonized: "[it] is not an encounter between the self and the enemy, the rulers and the ruled, or the gods and the demons. It is a battle between dehumanized self and the objectified enemy, the technologized bureaucrat and his reified victim, pseudo-rulers and their fearsome other selves projected on to their 'subjects'" (Nandy, 1983, p. 16).

Evidence exists that the psychological processes associated with colonialism remain active

long after the formal dismantlement of the colonial apparatus and "freeing" of the formerly colonized society (Nandy, 1983). As with other types of collective traumas, the traumatic effects of colonial practices on the colonized continue to be passed on intergenerationally, inducing stress and increasing vulnerability to psychopathology in the second and third generation (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). Moreover, although most colonies were formally dismantled by the late twentieth century, economic abuse, exploitation, and cultural domination of the former colonies by Western superpowers continue to this day – a practice that has been called *neo-colonialism* (Nkrumah, 1965).

Overall, above examples notwithstanding, psychological research on the traumatogenic effects of colonial and neocolonial violence and oppression on individuals and societies has been scarce, and it may be argued that the discipline actively contributes to the denial of these effects. This is true not only for the mainstream Western psychology but also for the cross-cultural and indigenous psychologies, which have emerged in recent decades with the purpose of studying "diverse" cultural groups. Cross-cultural psychology, based on the multicultural notion of "cultural diversity," illuminates and normalizes psychological differences that exist between cultures as well as underscores the importance of cultural identity issues and their role in psychological well-being. While this movement has helped decenter Western psychological theories and depathologize the non-Western "others," its tendency to relate to the observed differences between cultures in ahistorical and purely descriptive terms, without recognizing the psychological effects of historical violence and oppression, contributes to the denial of the damage caused by colonial violence and perpetuates oppression on subtler planes (Okazaki et al., 2008). The indigenous psychologies that have emerged in the various formerly colonized parts of the world reflect attempts to construct scientific psychological theories from within native societies, drawing upon the local cultural traditions and meant to be relevant to the society or group in question (Allwood, 2011).

While such efforts have liberating elements, in that they pose an alternative to the hegemony of the West in psychology, what makes them problematic is their tendency to describe ethnic psychological qualities in essentializing and homogenizing terms, thus exoticizing non-Western subjects (Said, 1979) and exerting pressures on them to be “perfectly non-Western” (Nandy, 1983, p. 73), thereby actually binding them even more strongly to the West (Nandy).

Sound research and practice paradigms that could be used to counteract colonialist and neocolonialist trends in psychology are still being sought (Okazaki et al., 2008). More important, perhaps, than specific research methodologies or practice guidelines are the awareness of the lasting impact of the colonial violence on individuals and groups and willingness to stretch our emotional and disciplinary limits by persistently stressing the historical contexts of the human experiences we study.

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Colonization, Overview

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Introduction

We, Carlos Rivera Santana and David Fryer, respectively Puerto Rican and British men, the authors of this encyclopedia entry on colonization, acknowledge that we currently live and work in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, in the

traditional lands of the Turrbal, Jagera, Yuggera, and Ugarapul peoples, the traditional owners of the wider Brisbane area. We pay our respects to elders both past and present.

Carlos acknowledges that, as a Puerto Rican man, he has been and continues to be subjected to, and a relay for, colonization by the United States and Spain. David acknowledges that as a British and European man, he is inescapably implicated in the colonization of Australia and countless other countries carried out by his countrymen on behalf of the British and other European Empires and that he benefits from colonizer privilege.

We, Carlos and David, also acknowledge that we do not live and work in a postcolonial situation – colonization is not only continuing but also diversifying and intensifying. We also acknowledge that psychology, indeed the psychocomplex in all its manifestations, has been, and continues to be, both intellectually colonized (by British and then United Statesian psychologies) and has been and is still also an instrument of colonization (e.g., through being a relay for western/northern individualized medicalized “mental health” discourses, technologies, practices). Finally here, we acknowledge that as we draw on critical theory, our frames of reference are discursively saturated by critique originally deployed in French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Definition

Definitions are generally explications of the meaning of a word or phrase within the frame of reference of the discourse within which the word or phrase occurs: definition is a metalinguistic activity but not a meta-discursive one. A word or a phrase in a subjugated discourse cannot be fully explained within the frame of reference of a dominant discourse, and definition of a word or a phrase in a dominant discourse using the resources of a subjugated discourse is not understandable to those operating with only the dominant discourse.

There is a problem in defining “colonization” because the discourse resources available to critical scholars like us, Carlos and David, are thoroughly implicated in colonization and to

define “colonization” using the resources of a discourse itself implicated in colonization is to reproduce colonization. Just as “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (Lorde, 1984/2007), colonization can never be definitionally dismantled using colonizing discourse – the process of definition will inevitably reinscribe colonization. This presents us with a dilemma. In that our approach to critical psychology and so to writing an entry in an *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology* is informed by the work of European critical theorists (Bourdieu, Fanon, Foucault, Gramsci, Marx, etc.) and by descendants of colonizing Europeans (Fals-Borda, Freire, Martín-Baró, etc.), it could be positioned as itself colonizing in the sense of operating through the deployment of alien nonindigenous discourses.

We are thus aware that in our attempt to approach colonization from a critical psychology standpoint and in positioning colonization as a process of dynamic, subjugating, subjective reconstitution accomplished through a nexus where administration, bureaucracy, culture, discourses, economic regimes, epistemological systems, history, judicial systems, legislation, ethical precepts, politics, “science,” spatial imperatives, etc. interconnect, we are deploying what may be positioned by some as a colonizing frame of reference because this positioning itself occurs within and through a discourse which owes a lot to the work of Frenchman Michel Foucault (e.g., Foucault, 1997/2007) and developments of it by scholars such as Englishman Nicholas Rose (e.g., Rose, 1989/1999) and Brazilian Joao Biehl (e.g., Biehl, 2005).

A key notion is that of *dispositif* (usually translated as “apparatus”) which Foucault explained as a “system of relations” established between the elements of a “heterogeneous” ensemble of “discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions” (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). A system of relations between the interconnected elements listed above (and others) is positioned as collectively constructing colonization as a subjectively reconstituting apparatus.

We alert the reader of the potentially colonizing nature of this definitional evasion.

Keywords

Foucauldian apparatus; subjectivity; dispositif/apparatus; colonizing and decolonizing practice

History

What would it be to write a history of “colonization” for an entry in an Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology?

In the writing of psychology textbooks and the teaching of psychology classes, “history” is often the positioning of a version of a contemporary thesis favored by the author as the inevitable outcome of a cumulative process of research and scholarship communicated through a narrative composed of a sequence of exemplary and cautionary vignettes from “the past.”

Canguilhem (1968, 1977) (cited in Rose 1996, p. 42) referred to such history as “recurrent history.” According to Rose recurrent histories “have a constitutive role to play in most scientific discourses. For they use the past to help demarcate that regime of truth which is contemporary for a discipline – and in doing so, they not only use history to police the present, but also to shape the future . . . such histories play their part in establishing a division between the sayable and the unsayable, the thinkable and the unthinkable” (Rose, pp. 42–43).

Clearly we should resist reproducing a version of recurrent history in relation to colonialization. This would consist in its crudest form in chronological or alphabetical ordering of the works of Fanon, Said, Tuhiwai, Smith, Spivak, etc. However, it is just as problematic to seek to explicate colonization by pointing to the etymological roots of words related to “colony” and “colonizing” as implicating cultivation of land by foreign inhabitants and thus chaining colonization to territorial expansion by imperial powers or to explicate colonization by pointing to legal and bureaucratic administration of those who

embodied the territorial expansion or by identifying colonization with particular moments in space-time, defining periods of time and areas of space as postcolonial with implied colonial and precolonial periods.

As Rose puts it: “A critical history is one that helps us think about our nature and our limits, about the conditions under which that which we take for truth and reality has been established. Critical history disturbs and fragments; it reveals the fragility of that which seems solid, the contingency of that which seemed necessary, the mundane and quotidian roots of that which claims lofty nobility. It enables us to think against the present . . .” (Rose, 1996/1998, p. 41). Psychology from its beginnings has been a major contributor to colonization from the psychometric devices for classifying and marginalizing people (Rose, 1989/1999, pp. 135–154) to the psychopathologizing of entire countries to depoliticize their manifestations of resistance (Makkawi, 2009). Since the development and introduction of the IQ test, psychology has been complicit with the colonizing process generated by scientific racism that segregated subjugated peoples in many places in the world (López-Garay, 2010). The pathologization agenda is another colonizing process that psychology has undertaken historically in which mental health pathology (madness) has been a tool for colonizing and individualizing problems, which are not situated in its particular context or historical situation. Furthermore the constitution of the modern bourgeois-centered subject (Venn, 1984) is another way to privilege a westernized form of thought, by constituting subjectivity in a rational and centered framework. This colonizing aspect of psychology was addressed by Paulo Freire (1972) and Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994) in the context of Latin América. As Martín-Baró wrote in *Towards a Liberation Psychology*, “instead of helping to tear down the edifice of common sense that in our culture both obscures and justifies the interests of the powerful by representing their techniques of control as character traits . . . psychologizing has served, directly or indirectly, to strengthen the oppressive structures, by drawing attention away from them and toward

individual and subjective factors” (Aron & Corne, 1994, p. 19). Martín-Baró was also profoundly critical of orthodox assumptions about mental health arguing that “mental disorders” are “the manifestation, in a person or group, of the humanizing or alienating character of a framework of historical relationships” (Aron & Corne, 1994, p. 111), i.e., a manifestation of “the disequilibrium inherent in social struggle” (Aron & Corne, 1994, p. 23).

Traditional Debates

The positioning of the colonized and colonizer relation as a battle to the death is generally associated with Franz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952). However long before this, it had been prefigured by Nietzsche’s notion of the master-slave relationship, civil movements of African-Americans in the United States, the post Second World War debate on self-determination of the colonies, Indian civil movements against British imperial domination, etc. From the context of French domination in Martinique and later on in Algeria, Fanon (a psychiatrist influenced by psychoanalysis) engaged in powerful critique of the processes of colonization and subjectification. Furthermore he actively participated in a sociopolitical agenda for the self-determination of Algeria (Fanon, 1990). Earlier, with the publication in 1978 of *Orientalism*, Palestinian scholar Edward Said had critiqued the way in which the westernized gaze upon the Middle East functioned to subjugate the East in the interests of the West (i.e., the United States and Europe). United Statesian interventions into the sovereign nations of El Salvador, Chile, Guatemala, among others, led to resistance to colonizing interventions of the USA and in combination with Marxism, Catholicism, and poststructuralism contributed to the development of liberation theology and liberation psychology (see Martín-Baró, 1985; Montero, 2004), critical race theory (Gates, 1988), poststructural feminist approaches, comparative literature (Said, 1978), critical and liberation pedagogy (Freire, 1972), subaltern studies (Gramsci 1971;

Spivak, 1988), etc. Three authors have particularly enriched contemporary critical understanding of the notion of colonization: Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (*Decolonizing Methodologies*, 2000), Ignacio Martín-Baró (*Writings for a Liberation Psychology*, 1994), and Gayatri Spivak (*Can the Subaltern Speak?* 1988).

Critical Debates

There is a tension between critical psychology and decolonizing approaches which is largely unacknowledged. From a critical standpoint no knowledge power system is exempt from critique, and some indigenous psychologies are, from a critical standpoint, as problematic as mainstream psychologies – indeed they are just other variants of mainstream psychology. For example, the Australian Indigenous Psychologists’ Association (AIPA) “is located within the Psychology in the Public Interest section of the Australian Psychological Society” and according to its vision statement “is committed to improving the social and emotional well-being and mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by increasing the number of Indigenous psychologists.” However, for instance, critique of indigenous psychologies by nonindigenous scholars is positioned by some as inevitably another form of colonization. Critical psychology has – as far as we know – yet to be subjected to sustained thorough analysis by indigenous and critical methodologists, but with its European critical roots, it is likely to be positioned as a colonizing approach by many. There is some justice in this for critical psychology knowledges and researchers are not exempt from decolonizing critique and indeed may be exemplifications of why it is needed. There is an urgent need for the various versions of critical psychology around the world to be scrutinized in terms of where they stand in relation to the consequences of past and ongoing territorial, cultural, educational, intellectual, and resubjectifying colonization. While many western/northern critical psychologists assume critical psychologies are vehicles for resistance to colonization, some in the East

and South are concerned that they may be a means of colonization and themselves the products of colonization. Critical psychologists should consider the possibility that, since the psy-complex could be said to be the hallmark of colonization, critical psychology could be positioned as a form of psy which functions in the interests of twenty-first-century neoliberal colonization.

Furthermore colonization is not assigned to a moment in a fragmented history nor only attached to nationalism. Without a doubt these notions colored its historicity because of particular historical and contextual conditions in time. If we take this as “truth,” in addition to many other manifestations of colonization, we can join in the claim of many indigenous, subaltern, south, and oppressed groups that colonization is not over. Therefore to talk about a postcolonial, and what it implies (academically or extra-academically), is to take for granted that the subjugating process of colonization is resolved. That is why, from a subjectivity and critical psychology perspective, colonization can be understood as an ongoing process, with the emphasis on process and not on the depository of the colonial, such as a nation, land, people, and so forth.

In this entry we have positioned colonization as a subjugating and obliterating process operating over time and against subaltern cultural groups, class groups, gender groups, and other social groups. Gayatri Spivak, when talking about the colonized woman, states “between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into pristine nothingness but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the “third world woman” caught between tradition and modernization” (1988, p. 102). This colonizing “movement” entails the process that colonization, through subject reconstitution, (re) produces the oppressed, locally and globally, in a simultaneous manner. For critical psychology the questions that arise are: How does psy reconstitute the subject into the subaltern? How does this *dispositif* operate and exert its subjugating and obliterating power? How do manifestations of colonization show us the colonizing process at work? How can decolonization be performed in a reflective critical manner? How can we deploy

a decolonizing sociopolitical agenda without reconstituting the colonizing process?

International Relevance

Few if any countries on earth have escaped colonization either as a colonizing country or as a colonized country or as both. Colonization is, thus, a pressing concern virtually everywhere. Coimbra et al. (2012) emphasize colonialism as a fundamental cause of misery and ill health in contemporary societies and “call for the development of . . . critical psychologies up to the task of understanding and contesting the constructed consequence of prolonged colonialist oppression . . .”

Practice Relevance

Communities around the world are in crisis as a result of past and ongoing colonization and its variants, imperialism, and neoliberal capitalist expansionism. Psychology, including critical psychology, as a manifestation of the psy-complex, which is both a means and a consequence of colonization, is politically and ideologically complicit in these crises. Resistance is, however, not only possible but essential in theory and practice in critical psychology.

Future Directions

Critical psychologists could do worse in the immediate future than work out the implications of Rose (1996, p. 45) who suggested that we should examine “the political, institutional, and conceptual conditions that gave rise to the formulation of different notions of the economy, the market, the laboring classes, the colonial subject. We should attend to the ways in which these problematized different aspects of existence (industrial disruption, productivity, health of the laborer whether free or slave, effective management of colonial plantations) from the perspective of ‘the economy’”. We should analyze the

ways in which these problematisations produced questions to which the psychosciences could come to provide answers. And we should explore the ways in which the psychosciences, in their turn, transformed the very nature and meaning of economic life and the conceptions of economic exigencies that have been adopted in economic activity and policy.”

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Online Resources

- <http://www.indigenouspsychology.com.au/page/2971/steering-committee>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZHH4ALRFHw>
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR_Cw&feature=related
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Fp6j9Ozpn4>

Common Sense, Overview

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Introduction

Common sense presents multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings, to the extent that it may be considered contradictory of itself. This contradictory nature is reflected in the relationship of common sense with critical psychology (Colucci, 2007). On the one hand the currents within psychology that define themselves as “critical” – from Holzkamp’s Berlin Critical Psychology

onwards – either have not included this concept in their inquiry or have considered it of marginal importance, placing greater emphasis on concepts such as consciousness which have been a more traditional focus for Marxist theory. On the other hand if critical psychology is to fulfil its declared aim to be emancipatory, it should value the common sense of the subjects it sets out to emancipate, that is to say, the “view from below” (Condor, 1997, p. 120).

Definition

According to the dominant thinking, common sense is nothing other than “what everyone knows”; it is universal; predictable; unreflecting; immune to criticism and doubt; if not a “dark area of ignorance,” a “tacit ordinary knowledge”; or “a kind of cognitive routine” corresponding to the routines of everyday life. These characteristics differentiate common sense from scientific thought. This almost stereotypical definition of common sense, which is a simplification of the ideas of authors such as Alfred Schutz (1962–1966), fails to reflect the complexity of a concept which is essentially “polysemic and polymorphous” as it was defined by Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), the founder of the “Partito Comunista d’Italia,” in the *Prison Notebooks* written during his long years of captivity under Fascism. The complexity of common sense was later recognized by some leading social psychologists (Billig, 1991; Potter, 1997) who coined for it the appropriate epithet of “a swirling kaleidoscope.” Thus, even defining common sense is problematic. It seems over-restrictive to view it as an aspect of individual cognition, given that “sense” involves feelings and affect more than thinking. In addition, popular culture in all its various manifestations is a key component of common sense, thus making it more social than individual in nature.

Common sense is conventionally viewed as a source of conformism and therefore of conservatism. Although this may be true to some degree, common sense can also be a source of change thanks to its critical capacity to act from

below. Compared to science, it is generally held to be an inferior form of thought. Nonetheless, there are those who consider it to be equal in status to scientific thought and even to be the foundation of science. Common sense is often unfavorably contrasted with good sense, but as Gramsci pointed out good sense is the “sound nucleus” of common sense.

It cannot even be taken for granted that common sense is “common,” given that it acts as a basis for both inclusion and exclusion.

The problematic and contradictory nature of common sense, its critical potential as an agent of change, and its use as a criterion for inclusion and exclusion all suggest that it should be of key concern to critical psychology.

Keywords

Popular culture; social representations; everyday life

Traditional Debates

In the modern age, the issue of common sense came to the fore in the second half of the eighteenth century with the Scottish School of Thomas Reid, who appealed to the knowledge accepted by all in order to oppose, in defense of tradition, the skepticism of David Hume. At the same time, Reid like Shaftesbury grasped the contradictory and complex nature of common sense (Billig, 2008).

However, it could be argued that Descartes laid down common sense as the very foundation of modern philosophy in declaring *ego cogito ergo sum* a certainty common to “men endowed with reason.” The question of what reason is and who has reason on their side, and consequently who is included in and who is excluded from universal common sense, remains open; unless we are prepared to accept the authority of Descartes himself or of some other party.

A view of common sense not as a universal mental faculty, but as a historical and cultural fact (*factum*) examined primarily in terms of its

linguistic and symbolic production, was put forward by Giambattista Vico (*Principj di Scienza Nuova*, 1744). Vico considered common sense to be made up of “uniform ideas among entire peoples” and attributed fundamental creative functions to these “uniform ideas,” defined as “popular knowledge” (“*sapienza volgare*”). Fables, beliefs, rites, and “mythical poetry” were understood for the first time as creations not of single individuals but of “common knowledge,” so important that the “secret knowledge of philosophers” was founded on it (*Scienza Nuova, Libro secondo*). Vico understood ideas to be “common” in that they were “shared” by those belonging to the same, potentially broad, culture. He therefore dropped the reference to “all men endowed with reason” prescribed by the Cartesian rationalism to which he was opposed.

Within a widespread culture for which the problem of common sense – together with that of public opinion – was becoming increasingly relevant, the French Illuminists dedicated an entry to *Sens commun* in the *Encyclopedia* (1751–1765), marking a milestone in the development of this concept in modern times. They defined common sense as “un jugement commun et uniforme” relative to the “*premières vérités*.” In other words, it was understood as a necessary and common basis for knowledge: in reference to these “*premières vérités*,” “*tous sont philosophes*” (everyone is a philosopher). The Encyclopedists thus established a far from self-evident principle of equality, which shortly after would undergo important historical developments with the revolutionary *Declaration des droits de l’homme e du citoyen* of 1789 addressed to “all men.”

Voltaire, in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), defined common sense as a feeling (“that which occurs deep in men’s hearts”) more so than a thought, thus going beyond the intellectual, merely cognitive, conception of common sense to include the emotions and feelings that intertwine with thought and influence it. Voltaire also underlined that common sense, as “*bon sens*,” has the capacity to criticize and reject superstitions and religious beliefs while the fear of a power (e.g., the power of a court to condemn

you to being impaled or burnt at the stake) that aims to impose such beliefs, “perverts” common sense, and inhibits its critical capacity.

Gramsci drew on Vico, the Encyclopedists, and Voltaire in developing his view of common sense, which has provided a fundamental basis for later developments of the concept (Colucci, 1999). While the original Marxist position was contradictory – given that on the one hand the masses were raised to the status of the protagonists of history, while on the other hand the thinking of the masses, common sense, was considered a passive echo of the dominant ideologies – Gramsci attempted to resolve this contradiction, which Billig (1991) has defined as the “paradox of ideology.” Gramsci considered Vico to be the main reference point on account of his vision of language and popular culture as constitutive components of common sense. Undoubtedly, common sense presents stereotypes, confused ideas, and archaic superstitions that can be traced back “to the cavemen” and are rooted in myths and religions. Moreover, it is on such archaic ideas that the latest notions of philosophy and science are laid down and metabolized. At the same time, common sense has critical capacity, potentially shared by “all men” – “*tous sont philosophes*” – precisely on account of its component of “good sense,” its “sound nucleus.” In Gramsci’s view, as in Voltaire, this “good sense” is not reducible to what it is commonly understood to be simple and mediocre reasonableness. It should be understood as the critical capacity to see through the deceptions of ideologies imposed from above (by the dominant classes) often through the use of fear.

The “sound nucleus” and its associated critical potential explain how common sense, which is generally conformist and conservative, may be transformed into “a new common sense” that sets off emancipatory processes of change. Such change is related to the “cultural hegemony” that was one of Gramsci’s key concerns. Specifically, while Leninism focused on political hegemony, for Gramsci the political struggle was necessarily intertwined with the battle for cultural hegemony to be fought at a social and institutional level starting with school. In this context, Gramsci promoted the idea of a dialectical relationship between

the masses and the elites. According to this view, the movement of ideas should only not proceed from the top down, that is to say, be transmitted from those who believe themselves fit to create and propose new thinking to those who are not, but it should also come from the bottom up. Therefore, the movement of ideas should not be unidirectional but bidirectional and therefore truly dialectical. In this dialectic, the subjectivity of individuals is not absorbed by the thinking of the masses because each individual subject is required to play an active and conscious role.

This process should take place within history (Gramsci uses the concept of “historical consciousness”), while “praxis” (Tätigkeit) must take real-life conditions into account. Gramsci’s thinking may not have won political support, but it has had considerable impact at a cultural level.

Critical Debates

The issue of common sense was explicitly addressed in Heider’s (1958) “ingenuous psychology” based on everyday language and on the ability of all men to be psychologists, which he proposed in opposition to the scientism of North American psychology. The latter did not take up Heider’s challenge, but developed – as more in keeping with its own thinking – attribution theory, transforming the ingenuous scientist into the cognitive miser.

Cognitivism thus became emblematic of the marked disparagement of common sense, understood as a purely mental faculty, characteristic of the mainstream within psychology. It emphasizes the biases and heuristics typical of the layman’s thinking, which persistently makes the same mistakes and takes the same cognitive shortcuts.

Moscovici’s theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) critiqued cognitivism and, following Heider, set out to revalue common sense (“the thinking society”), but his revaluation of common sense proved problematic. He assumed a dualistic relationship between scientific and consensual thought considering the latter “prelogical, primitive, incapable of abstraction” and displaying a universal tendency to anchor new ideas – which

it resists – to that which is already known. In this way, common sense runs the risk of remaining conformist and conservative.

The rediscovery of the critical value of common sense came about due to Billig’s discursive and rhetorical psychology. Billig (1991) returned to the ideas of Gramsci on account of the key role that the Italian had attributed to language. Common sense, with its commonplaces, thus became a key focus for the critical analysis of ideologies. In this view, common sense is not only the reproduction in individuals of broad coherent ideology but a source of contradictions and tensions that can lead to change (Potter, 1997, p. 60).

Within the framework of critical psychology, although cultural hegemony is still mainly viewed as a product of the dominant ideologies that can lead the dominated groups to accept inequalities and injustices (Huygens, 2009), it is also recognized that “if aspects of popular culture and the like can be used conservatively to reinforce prejudices and established social relations, these resources can equally be mobilized to social and political change” (Spears, 1997, p. 23).

The contradictions of common sense are of key importance today for critical and emancipatory psychology which must take into account the new forms of virtual communication and the associated movements that came to the fore, for instance, in the Arab countries with the wave of social unrest that from 2011 spread from Tunisia to the Persian Gulf. Such developments throw up new issues regarding cultural hegemony and relations between the elites and the masses, to the extent that a rethinking of these concepts is now required.

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Online Resources

<http://www.victoryiscertain.com/gramsci/>

Communication

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Introduction

The term communication is used excessively and everybody thinks to know what is meant by it: Communication is about the exchange of messages, news, and information. The notion of communication is used on such general terms that the question for a more systematic understanding does not arise. A criticism that gets right to the heart of the debate comes from the German author

Botho Strauss, who called the word “communication” the ugliest word of the epoch: He regards the word “communication” as a “brutal garbage disposal word” that reflects a reductionistic image of humanity. “An author does not communicate with the reader. He tries to seduce, to amuse, to provoke, to revive. Husband and wife do not communicate with each other. The various riddles with which they present each other, would find their most shallow solution as soon as this negligible term steps between them. A catholic who means he ‘communicates’ with God, would have to be excommunicated immediately. One prays to God, one does not have a conversation with him but receives a Holy Communion. All our happy and futile attempts to communicate with the world, to touch and to influence ourselves, the entire diversity of our emotions and intentions falls victim to the monotony of an abbreviated socio-technical term. With it, we encourage the meaningless that eats up our language with great appetite.” (Strauss, 2004, p. 41).

In psychology the term is used to describe nonverbal, verbal, and paraverbal forms of exchange of signals between persons. Beyond technical and structural description, the functional purpose remains imprecise: an insufficient description of cognitive and social functions. Its primary role for the organization of practical actions, that humans have to execute in order to live in their cultures and to create and sustain them, is rarely recognized either.

Definition

Communication means processes of two or more partners to coordinate their actions for common or separate goals that could not be achieved without the contribution of the partners. Media, signals, modalities, and systems used are arbitrary but have to be interpretable by the participants. The content of communication lies in the purpose of the intended actions to be accomplished. It is not “in” the sign or signal or symbol used. It can only be gained by interpreting subjects.

Human beings live in cultures built by themselves over generations. As a result, the produced

“provisions” in the most general sense such as objects, tools, means of transportation, and victuals are historicized. These societal life conditions would not have come into being without the contribution of coordinated actions of many members of society in the form of a division of labor and cooperation. They would not continue to exist today either if the humans in a culture abandoned these actions. The complexity of communication mirrors the complexity of coordinated human activities, and it constitutes the complexity of human thinking (Davidson, 2001).

Keywords

Communication; language; speech; cognition; mass media; inner speech

History

Primarily we understand “communication” as the human forms of communication articulated by speech. But in the “information age,” the term is used in a very general way to describe all kinds of exchanges of information, for example, with electronic devices like computers, in broadcasting, television, and all other media. But the origin of communication in animals and human lies in their need to coordinate common activities for the survival of the particular species by means of signals. At least these signals served to enable partners to meet for reproduction activities mediated by pheromones, to go for common foraging, for fighting or fleeing from enemies, and for bringing up their offspring (Ploog, 1972; Tembrock, 1975; Holzkamp-Osterkamp, 1975). Like communication in animals, human communication is a function of the specific human ways to produce and organize their life in cultures by a division of labor and cooperation. All this mediation needs communication because most human individuals live in a culture and the existence of a single individual is mediated by the contributions of many others to shared actions and by the means produced and supplied by other people (eventually globally). It is needed to produce, to

organize, and to use means of production, of transport, etc., and for communication itself. Communication serves a common appraisal in orientation, emotions, thinking, and actions resulting in coordination which makes shared actions successful. Without that, an individual cannot develop his *action potency in culture* (► [German Critical Psychology](#)), is unable to contribute to the cultural processes, and cannot share their benefits. Vice versa, cultures could and would not develop their powers without the manifold contributions from actions and knowledge of skilled people. Besides coordinative nonverbal signs in different modalities (gestures, facial expressions, status symbols, etc.), human communication uses the characteristic articulated, sign, and symbolic languages (► [Language and Speech](#)). Though they use different perceptual and motor modalities: articulated speech with its prosody and music in the auditory mode, writing, gestures, and pictures in the visual mode, and strokes and braille writing in a tactile mode. The modes are different from each other and relate to a special need, but the function remains the same: Humans coordinate their actions this way (Messing & Werani, 2009).

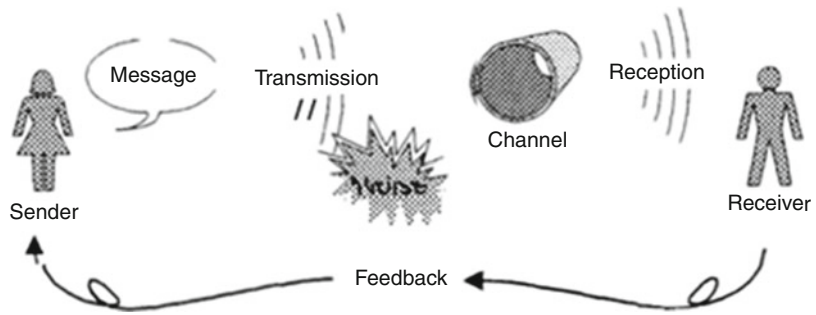
The cultural patterns of language become a mode of cognition, a manifestation of specific linguistic thought shared between people, through which the organization and evaluation of a subject’s own actions are accomplished primarily in the mode of language (► [Inner Speech](#)). The study of human cognition today widely ignores this.

Traditional Debates

The relevance of communication for common action was already underlined in the tale of the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis II, 6–9). The bible reports how the construction of the enormous tower failed, when God disarrayed the peoples’ language and they could not understand each other anymore. Realization of great human projects in the form of cultures requires a language, a common mode of communication. In case this is not available, it cannot succeed.

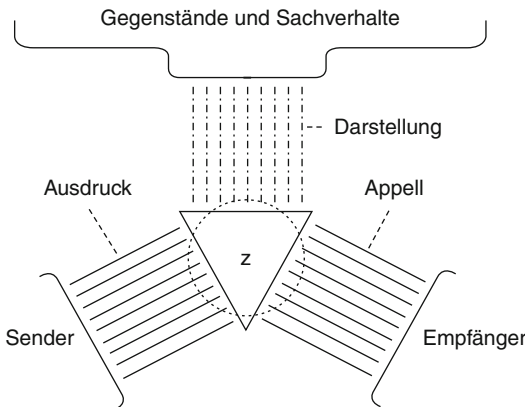
Communication,

Fig. 1 The sender-receiver model by Shannon and Weaver (1949). (U.S. Congress 1995)



The application of the term arises in the twentieth century with the development and distribution of means of mass communication. The sender-receiver metaphor for communication emerges here. It is first found in the Organon model by Karl Bühler in his theory of language (1934, p. 24). He refers to Plato's treatment of language as organum, as tool, and suggests to treat symbols, especially linguistic symbols, as tools with a threefold, complex proficiency.

The sign stands in the center here and enfold three functions: first, the expression of the sender;



second, the representation of objects and circumstances; and third, the appeal to the receiver.

The sender-receiver metaphor is used again in the model of communication by Shannon (1948), which is still the most widespread model worldwide. It was conceived as a mathematical model of technical communication, but was interpreted by Shannon and Weaver (1949) as a model of human communication as well (Fig. 1).

In their axioms of communication, Watzlawick et al. (1967) have taken up the

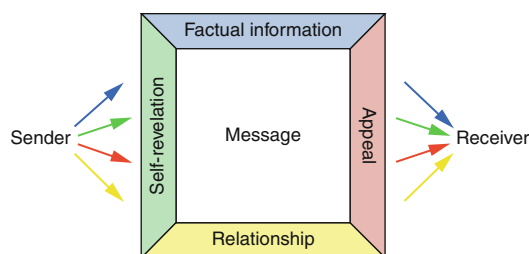
questions of the psychological effect and functionality of communication. They defined five popular known axioms in their theory of communication:

1. One cannot not communicate.
2. Every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication.
3. The nature of a relationship is dependent on the punctuation of the partners' communication procedures.
4. Human communication involves both digital and analog modalities.
5. Interhuman communication procedures are either symmetric or complementary, depending on whether the relationship of the partners is based on differences or parity.

Notably in axioms one to three and five, they rightfully emphasize that communication always also expresses the status of development of the relationship between the participants. They underline that the relationship part even dominates the content part, which means that a receiver puts more emphasis on *how* something is said, than on *what* is said. This refers to the foundation for all human communication in that we live in societal relations and always depend on each other and therefore interpret other persons primarily according to how willing they are to cooperate with us. Cooperation is more important to us than the content of the current communication.

In his model of the four pages of a message, Schulz von Thun (1981) integrates the relationship aspect into Bühler's model. According to this, human communication processes are always

evaluated by the listener according to what the speaker says about the relationship (relationship aspect), which emotions he expresses (aspect of self-revelation), which objects he talks about (content aspect), and which appeals he formulates with the utterance (aspect of appeal), that is, what the other is consequently doing or thinking.



All sender-receiver models disregard to reflect on the necessary basis and foundation for all communication in the cultural connectedness in cooperative or rival actions of human beings. They are therefore of marginal benefit for describing individual as well as organizational communication. This critique holds even for the view on global communication in the interest of US policy, which can be seen in the government's handbook by the US Congress: Academic researchers have traditionally defined communication in accordance with the sender/receiver model developed by Shannon and Weaver in their work on information theory. [...] Despite a long history, this model is less useful today, given the convergence of information and communication technology and an interactive, multimedia environment in which communication no longer takes place in a linear fashion. With a computerized bulletin board, for example, how does one identify and distinguish between who is the sender and who is the receiver of a message? And similarly, who is considered the sender of a message when the receiver can now access information on demand?

The Shannon and Weaver model is also inappropriate for analyzing social processes and policy issues; the somewhat passive notions of "message," "sender," and "receiver" draw attention to the problems of effective communication.

However, they downplay any problems involved in, or issues about, who gets to formulate, send, and access information; on what basis; and with what objectives and effects. It is, in fact, precisely these kinds of issues that may determine whether, and the extent to which, communication and information technologies serve US foreign aid goals (US-Congress, 1995, p.77).

Critical Debates

The understanding of communication in social systems is frequently discussed. This is important. However, models of communication will remain helpless and empty when the core of what really characterizes communication is not defined, namely, whether understanding is confirmed or fails, how social systems develop or fail, that is, the cooperative action of their human participants and the division of labor in their cultures. Communication will then appear as a purpose in itself, as a "social obligation" which, like many psychological theories, has lost reference to the human world and their real practical activities, to the production of authentic human (or inhuman) conditions. This strengthens the "worldlessness of psychology" (Holzkamp, 1996).

Mass communication ([Mass Media](#)) enables human beings to coordinate the orientation, thinking, emotions, and actions of many people, potentially of a culture's entire population or even globally. Sometimes people and organizations, who own, organize, or influence mass media, try to display their intentions as general interests although they are purely self-motivated. This makes manipulation of orientation, thought, and action in the interest of political, religious, or economic powers possible.

Manipulation can succeed by means of justifications and "evidences" for thought and action (Chomsky, 1997). They are constructed in such a way that they seem to represent general human interests, which are ascribed to the public as necessary: the "Liberation of people from

Communism,” “Totalitarianism,” “Dictatorship,” and “Terrorism,” from the “Axis of Evil.” Or economic sanctions and military interventions are justified with falsified “facts” (e.g., the Second World War, the Vietnam War, “Operation Iraqi Freedom”). Attempts are made to force persons into cooperation against their own interests by providing them with reasons for actions and thinking by means of new terms and a new model of justification that promotes misperception and disorientation.

Practice Relevance

Communication disorders of individuals occur due to lack of knowledge and language, by means of mobbing, isolation, autism, deprivation of usage of means of communication, or due to illness processes like aphasia, mental disability, and dementia. They compromise not only the communication but also the entire action and thought of people and their contributions to the common culture like the development of their own psychic processes. Therefore, just like the exclusion from practical work and the codetermination of one’s own life conditions (e.g., due to unemployment) are severe impairments of human life conditions, the exclusion from common communication and therefore from thinking within human culture are so too. If this is established deliberately, it has the character of violence or torture. Humanity demands the abolition of such conditions.

Future Directions

Those frequently discussed communication models of the twentieth century implicate decisive problems, which were not yet resolved in a more complex approach. Communication has to be clarified in the context of social and cultural interests not only for scientific purpose but also for daily individual communication as well as for mass communication. A central concern should

be to clear the production of information for certain purposes: the intentions of “coordinators” that possess power and devices to set the aims and themes of communication (agenda setting).

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Online Resources

- <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/short/trans.html>
- <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/129024/communication>

Community

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Introduction

The substantial academic literature on the concept of community is moderately relevant to contemporary Western psychology scholarship, while being central to psychology in some other cultural perspectives and at the same time problematic in other cultures. Moderate (or lack of) importance is illustrated by its absence in Andrew M. Coleman's (2009) Third Edition of the Oxford Dictionary of Psychology among other sources such as introductory psychology textbooks, but a comprehensive assessment of importance comes from considering sociocultural influences and reviewing extant research. Although the concept of community has had only a moderate impact on Western psychology, it is central to an African perspective of psychology that links communal life with personhood (Mkhize, 2004). From a sociocultural perspective, the concept of community seems to have always been present in African cultures, according to oral and subsequently written histories, and a part of religious life for some such as those living in a kibbutz. Its relative importance is increasing as the discipline of Western psychology evolves from focusing solely on an individual (e.g., intrapsychic, psychodynamic) to incorporating interpersonal relationships and social influences (e.g., research topics in social psychology) to understanding individuals within social and physical environments (e.g., as concerns community psychology and environmental psychology).

In Western psychology, the concept of community has largely been adopted from other disciplines, most notably sociology, but biology and political and health sciences among other fields have influenced current psychological conceptualizations. A review of seemingly secular

conceptualizations in the Western academic literature reveals that community is a nebulous unit of analysis and findings on the impact of community on both individuals and communities that are inconsistent. Conflicting findings relate to widely varying conceptualizations of community, render the concept ambiguous and relativistic, at worst, and constructionist at best. Within studies some researchers employ the term without clear or shared meanings between insiders and outsiders to a community, and across studies the unit of analysis (e.g., locality, organizational, macrosystems) varies. Consequently, interpreting how community impacts psychological phenomena becomes extremely challenging and in some cases impossible. If, however, community is constructed from critical conceptualizations, then there is a potential for distinguishing the elements and mechanisms may effect psychological factors such as cognitions, affect, and behavior, inclusive of mental health and well-being. Because a critical analysis of concepts requires understanding social, historical, and political contexts, it is important to note that this encyclopedia entry is informed predominantly by academic literature written in the English language during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that built on publications in the field of sociology, initially written in the German language, during the nineteenth century, as well as a few selected works written in the French language.

Definition

Aspects of general definitions of community from multiple societies and time periods are part of contemporary social science conceptualizations. In an African perspective community is an organic association of people living a common life, which excludes individual lives (Mkhize, 2004). Elsewhere, etymology shows that the English word community comes from the Old French language, which came from the Latin language, in which it meant togetherness (*cum*) is a gift (*munus*). In the French language

during the Middle Ages, “communauté” defined property held in common by spouses to be shared in dissolution of a marriage. (Contemporary definitions and conceptualizations by French scholars are below in critical debates.) A widely referenced conceptualization of community specific to social sciences comes from a translation of the German sociological term *Gemeinschaft* articulated by Ferdinand Tönnies (1887/1957) who conceived it as organic social relationships tightly bound by kinship in which exchanges and obligations were made on the basis of social relationships rather than on capital. In these conceptualizations from Africa, France, and Germany, a family (in its various compositions depending on sociocultural context) is one of several types of communities, which stands in contrast to most North American conceptualizations in social science that do not include family.

Social scientists have been using this word for longer than 100 years without conceptual clarity (see Hillary, 1955), and there are more than 100 definitions, with 94 of these presented in 1955 by George Hillary, and a common characteristic is that community concerns people. Community was used initially to refer to a group of people who lived in close proximity. When this use of the term was common, folks who lived near one another also passed most of their lives in one relatively contained geographical location, such as where they worked, sent children to school, worshiped, and socialized. Thus, one type of community is locale based. Later, sometime after industrialization in Western Europe and the USA, fewer folks shared the same locale for a majority of activities. Consequently, alternative communities formed that were based on relationships (e.g., working together or attending the same school but living in different neighborhoods).

In addition to these two types of communities (geographical and relational), some researchers make another distinction for a third type of community, a political community, which forms on the basis of a need for collective power. A few examples of research that characterized communities as political include, but are not limited to, an African-American community, a gay community,

environmentalist community, and so on. Arguably, political parties are political communities. A question has been raised in the literature whether a political community is a new type of community or if it is another type of relational community, but relatively few publications have addressed this point. From this perspective, some groups by location and/or relational characteristics are also political communities.

From these various types of communities, common characteristics can be determined. A community is composed of individuals grouped by association, whether locale, relationship, or power based or a combination of these characteristics. A community exists when individuals enhance their quality of life by working together to solve individual and group problems (Nisbet, 1970), which presupposes that “citizen participation” (Kloos et al., 2011) is an individual behavior that when performed with others creates community.

Psychologists have conceived community by connecting a sociological conception of community with a psychological sense of belonging, attachment, and behaviors of meeting others needs and influencing a community. Chavis and Newbrough (1986) wrote: “[a] community should be defined as any set of social relations that are bound together by a sense of community” (p. 335). Some define community itself by a psychological sense an has of belonging to a group or social structure that may include exchange of resources, norms, and values. An empirical approach shows that a majority of communities defined in studies have a high degree of homogeneity, a shared characteristic such as location (e.g., neighborhood), values, or beliefs, and sometimes includes ethnicity, religion, and other sociodemographic characteristics. From the many and varied conceptualizations, arguably community is the end result of organized communal life (Alinsky, 1971) comprised of people who have some degree of interdependence and shared connection (emotional, work, etc.) (Heller, 1989) who communicate with each other (Sarason, 1974) and have influence on the collective (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Keywords

Citizen participation; communal life; community psychology; cybercommunities; depoliticization geographical communities; kibbutz; interpersonal relationships; neighboring; organic relationships; personhood; place-based communities; political communities; psychological sense of belonging; self-help groups; sense of community; social network; social relations; social structures; support groups; virtual communities

Traditional Debates

Perhaps because of conceptual ambiguity, debates center around what makes a social structure distinctly a community and not something else. This issue can be understood as how social structures are codified, with a community being one type. All communities are a social structure (or group), but not all social groupings are a community.

Two types of structures relevant to the field of psychology that may form communities are self-help groups and support groups. Although these groups provide similar functions, an important distinction between the groups exists. These groups differ by governance. In self-help groups, members who share a common experience (e.g., parents having a child with learning disabilities, individuals working to lose and maintain weight) run the groups with no professional involvement and support each other fulfilling needs not met by informal networks. Self-help groups are a form of community (Humphreys & Rappaport, 1994). In contrast, support groups are organized and run by professionals with little if any control by group participants. Sometimes these groups become relational communities, but governance or influence that is characteristic of community precludes many support groups from meeting this criterion.

Another structure in the psychology literature is an individual social network. Generally, social networks have been thought of as a positive system of individuals on whom one can rely for

social, emotional, and tangible support. This type of network provides social support. Of course, a social network is not necessarily positive. It may also be a source of stress for an individual. Networks exist within and outside of a community as well as across multiple communities; networks also vary in size. Social networks may operate as a relational community, but there are areas of distinction and overlap between communities and networks; social networks connect beyond a single community.

A related debate is whether an inherent aspect of community requires face-to-face communications and interactions in real physical space. This debate specifically addresses the question of whether individuals communicating with each other solely through electronic communications via the Internet comprise a community. Popular conceptions of community generally include cyber or virtual communities as another form of relational communities. Whether community exists in cyberspace has been and continues to be tested through research. This debate is recent and not settled. There are strong arguments and evidence supporting both sides. Cyber communities have been characterized as having many of the same qualities (e.g., rule structures, shared connections) as communities comprised of people who have met in the real world (Fernback, 1999), and there is research consistent with these claims – a study of an online community of children of missionaries (mkPlanet) found that they had developed and sustained an online community for a minimum of 8 years (at the time of publication and is still thriving) that meets most of the criteria of a physical community (Loomis & Friesen, 2011). On the other side of the debate are findings that electronically organized people, grouped with Facebook or MySpace, in fact do not create a community, or communities, but rather represent networked individualism (Reich, 2010). These mixed findings inform the debate and suggest that virtual social structures may operate in ways highly similar to physical social structures where not all social structures are a form of community.

Critical Debates

Critical debates of the concept of community address issues of inclusion, diversity, and power, situating it within sociopolitical and historical contexts. The idea of community at its base is in search of harmonious, non-conflictual social organization. Implicit in “community” is the practice of policing assimilation and defining boundaries of insiders and outsiders, and outsiders are only permitted in through assimilation of values, ideas, interests, etc. Essentialist definitions of the term do not capture who defines particular communities nor describe an understanding of dynamic processes that generate, sustain, and dissolve community. The aspect of organic relationships is lost in many conceptualizations. Critics argue that community as an objective entity does not exist; rather community organizations exist (Gouëset & Hoffmann, 2002; Landfried, 2005).

The term community is applied by others to individuals who seemingly share a characteristic, which is sometimes gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, etc. (Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). Most conceptualizations of community highly constrain the degree of diversity within the boundaries of a community. In fact, if diversity exists then a definition of community is generally not applied. A critical approach to defining community examines who defines community whether it is an insider or an outsider and how it is defined by qualifications, characteristics, or criteria that demark a border of inclusion and exclusion (Jewkes & Murcott, 1996). In South Africa the term community has default references to marginalized, oppressed, or disadvantaged groups, and using the term communities serves to avoid “issues of race and privilege” (Sigogo & Modipa, 2004, p. 317). In sum, when outsiders refer to a group of people as not belonging to a particular community, this is an act of depoliticization (Gouëset & Hoffmann, 2002).

Many of the varied conceptualizations of community share the aspect of having a high degree of similarity among the people who make up

a particular community; thus, by definition community limits diversity and innovation. Constraints on differences are in place in formal and informal processes for entering and leaving a community and for influencing a community. Specifically, a mechanism of community is a sort of policing that controls individual behavior and enacts sanctions to remediate deviant acts or expel individuals who do not conform, which is a clear example of a community’s influence on individuals. McMillan and Chavis (1986) conceptualized influence as bidirectional with a community influencing an individual and an individual influencing a community.

As conceptualized for the most part in the academic literature, an important factor in an individual’s potential to influence a community is the degree of similarity between an individual and the community in terms of values and beliefs. We can view this effect on a continuum. As similarity between an individual and a community increases, so does the potential for an individual to be successful in exerting influence on that particular community. As similarity decreases individuals with differing values have little to no real power and in fact are often expelled from a community if they do not conform to communal expectations or the wishes of a few powerful community members. Sometimes pressures can be strong, consequences of not conforming high, and leaving not a viable option. In these circumstances the result is “coercive community” (personal communication, Mindi Foster, 2003). In this case, unwilling individuals without voice play a role and have a relationship with the community that is perfunctory, rendering possible benefits of community inaccessible (to individuals and the community). In coercive community powerful elite community members directly or indirectly control the agenda for the community as well as the ideas, ideology, and behaviors of its members, and in this sense, community is undone as the group becomes (or sustains having been) a social structure with unequal distribution of privilege and power; the itself is often retained, serving as a mask for other less communal structures such as work groups or institutions.

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Online Resources

- Community organizing <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/co/>
- Community Toolbox: Understanding and Describing the Community http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1020.aspx
- Definitions of community http://www.community4me.com/comm_definitions.html
- Society for Community Research and Action (Division 27 of the American Psychological Association) <http://www.scr27.org>

Community of Practice

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Introduction

The concept of “communities of practice” is of relatively recent date. The concept gained momentum with Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s book from 1991, *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Since then, the notion of “communities of practice” has been a focus of attention, not least in debates about learning, teaching, and education but also in debates about organizational theory, knowledge management, and work-life studies. The latter development accelerated with Wenger’s later book *Communities of Practice* (Wenger, 1998), but also picked up fuel from neighboring texts by – amongst others – Paul Duguid and John Seely Brown (1991) and Julian Orr (1996). The concept of communities of practice offers a dynamic and non-individualistic framing of learning as a social and situated activity oriented towards participation in social practice. From this also springs a number of interesting observations about human agency, cooperation, organization, and communities.

Definition

It is difficult to give a traditional and clear definition of the concept “communities of practice.” The qualities of the concept are exactly to point to connections and communities in our reality that we often overlook because they transcend theoretical generalizations and concepts. Communities of practice are constituted by people’s shared concerns and passions about, e.g., work tasks, problems, challenges, or possibilities they face in their everyday life. Hence, we need a situated approach to identify communities of practice.

Lave and Wenger (1991) initially developed the concept to describe the social dynamics of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As human beings we are constantly engaged in the pursuit of enterprises of all kinds. And as we define and engage in these enterprises, we interact with others and with the world, simultaneously adjusting our relations with each other and with the world. In other words: we learn. Over time, this collective learning results in shared practices that reflect not only our pursuit of enterprises but also a pursuit of the attendant social relations. Our learning is thus the property of a kind of community, that it makes sense to call a *community of practice*. The characteristics of such communities vary. Some have names, many do not. Some are formal in organization, others are fluid and informal. The key is that communities of practice are not given with just a shared location, profession, or citizenship. Communities of practice involve a shared *practice*. Lave and Wenger (1991) therefore described communities of practice as something that is created over time through a process of *legitimate peripheral participation*. Legitimation and participation together define the characteristic ways we belong to communities, whereas peripherality and participation are concerned with our location and identity in the social world (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

From these simple definitions spring some rather important observations. First, learning is not something reserved for special occasions or settings. Learning takes place all the time. It is an inherent and social aspect of our participation in

social practices. Secondly, communities of practice therefore comprise a complex interrelatedness between people’s development of identity, community, and participation in social life. Lave and Wenger termed this *Situated learning*, and this is part of what the concept, “communities of practice,” signifies. The descriptions also point to three interrelated characteristics (Wenger, 1998):

1. The domain: A community of practice is defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain and a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. For example, a group of street children in Dhaka, Bangladesh, may have developed all sorts of ways of dealing with their domain: surviving on the street and maintaining some kind of identity they can live with. They value their collective competences and learn from each other, even though few people outside the group may value or even recognize their expertise.
2. The community: In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. Hence, communities of practice are constituted by a mutual engagement and a joint enterprise.
3. The practice members of a community of practice are therefore practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems – in short a shared social practice, that cannot be understood as merely cognitive, instrumental, or task orientated. Social practice constitutes a social entity in which any clear distinction between the subject and world, thinking and action, and the individual and the community is lifted. Shared practices weave together the participant’s learning, cooperation, identity, and community.

Communities of practice are everywhere and we are all involved in a number of them – whether at work, school, home, or the sports club. Communities of practice have been around for as long as human beings have lived and learned together. In fact, they are such a familiar background

of everyday life and practice, that they often escape our attention. Yet, given a name, the concept helps us understand our world and ourselves better. It helps us develop less individualistic understandings of persons and more complex understandings of learning, knowledge, communities, and practice. Equally important it helps us see past and across formal social distinctions, divisions, and group categorizations, so that we might spot how we are actively connected and engaged in shared practices in manifold ways. The concept stresses that all forms of existence and practice involve the development of specific competencies and knowledge. Hence, a lot of people, e.g., the street children in Dhaka, have skills, competencies, and reasons for their actions that are often hidden from our sight by impoverished conceptions of learning and knowledge. The concept of communities of practice moves us away from such abstract conceptualizations, not only of learning and knowledge but also of communities and social practice. If we want to identify how and with whom people actually orientate themselves, learn, and share information, stories, and experiences, we need a *situated* understanding of the practices people are engaged in as well as a genuine interest in the participants' *own* perspectives on *what* they are engaged in. Jean Lave therefore describes communities of practice as "a way of looking, not a thing to look for" (Lave, 2008). The quote stresses that the concept has radical epistemological and methodological implications and constitutes an attempt to replace the detached view of the world, often purported by science.

Keywords

Situated learning; legitimate peripheral participation; practice; domain; community; mutual engagement; joint enterprise; shared repertoire

Critical Debates

Science, Subjectivity, and Societal Structures

An important discussion in psychology concerns our understanding of the relationship

between subject and object, the individual and society. The perspective of communities of practice attempts to transcend these debates, focusing instead on the *unity* of these dimensions in social practice. The situated approach emphasizes not only the social character of human learning and practice but also the individual agency that goes into practice. Hence, the perspective is neither individualistic nor structuralist. Communities of practice are not *done* to people. Neither are they products of individual creation. They are something *people do together*. This is why we need a *situated* understanding of the practices people are engaged in, in order to study the formation and dynamics of social life.

Learning, Knowledge, and Education

At an educational level the perspective is radical. The perspective criticizes dominating understandings of learning, where learning (somewhat simplistic formulated) is assumed to be an individual, cognitive process that manifests itself in people's ability to process information and follow rules and instructions. Here the learner is portrayed as little more than a passive recipient, on whom learning and knowledge is inscribed, and the success of education is reduced to measurements of the learners ability to retransmit information as unaltered as possible. Contrary to this view, the perspective of communities of practice emphasizes the social character and practice-orientated base of all processes of learning. Learning is not about individual information processing. It is about people's formation of identity, communities, and opportunities to participate in social practice and social life. In continuation of this, the perspective challenges our culture's lack of respect for practical forms of knowledge, learning, and education and the dualist distinctions between mind and body, person and world, and thinking and action, often found in cognitive learning theory. Embedded in this criticism is also a radical critic of our educational institutions and how they contribute to social differences and inequalities, even though they strive to deliver equal opportunities and democracy.

Organizational Theory, Work, and Cooperation

The perspective also adds a layer of complexity to the study of organizations. In his later book *Communities of Practice* (Wenger, 1998), Wenger unfolded this complexity, focusing on different dualities that exist in organizational communities of practice, dualities such as participation-reification or designed-emergent. His analyses of these dualities have proved to be of interest to organizational theory, work-life studies, and management theories, not least because of their links to time-current questions about organizational learning, knowledge management, and social capital. Wenger identified how work is full of tacit improvisations, situated knowledge, and social relations that constitute important gaps between what a work task looks like from outside or in a process manual and what it looks like in reality. The concept of communities of practice points out important dilemmas and inherent conflicts in work standardization, knowledge management, and organizational learning. On a more fundamental level, it also challenges the theoretical adequacy of functionalistic understandings of organizational life, including here the widespread presumption that the market is driven by purely economic dynamics. The latter suggests that economic theory constitutes the mother tongue of all commercial organizational life that can therefore be described in abstract terms. The perspective of communities of practice suggests otherwise. It underscores that neither organizations nor the market can be understood purely theoretically or structurally. The perspective therefore affords suspicion towards any attempt – politically or otherwise – to elevate economics or other structural features to authoritative voices of realism.

Power, History and Social Conflicts

Human actions cannot be understood in abstraction from their specific contexts of social practice. This goes for the study of societal structures, but it also applies to the study of power. Power is not only restrictive, but also enabling. It is not a clear locatable “thing” that some have and others don’t, but rather something that relate to

processes, we are all entangled in our everyday life. By our activities, we participate on a daily basis in the structuring of our own as well as others’ conditions of action. The relevant question is therefore not if power is exercised or not. The relevant question is how power is exercised and whether or not we relate to and collaborate with others in a mutually inclusive or exclusionary manner: Do we develop our connectedness, or are we rather developing social differences, borders and distance? The concept of power, implied in the perspective of communities of practice, shares an affinity with the work of the French philosopher, Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1990). Power is described as an immanent and productive aspect of social practice. That said, there are also *differences* between, e.g., Lave and Wenger’s work (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Foucault (Foucault, 1990). It follows from the perspective of communities of practice that history cannot, as Foucault suggests, be fully understood from the point of texts and discourse. Lave and Wenger focused on contradictions and conflicts as a fundamental developmental dynamic in social practice. However they focused on contradictions and conflicts between oldtimers and newcomers, continuity and displacement in social practice. As a result much research on communities of practice examine conflicts within organizations and communities of practice rather than between organizations and communities of practice. Thus, the concept has been criticized of paying too little attention to wider structural conflicts in society, relating e.g. to gender, ethnicity, and social divisions of labor (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Hughes et al., 2007)

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Community Psychology

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Introduction

In this entry, we pose questions as to whether community psychology is a route to “liberation and well-being” or a contemporary form of the psy-complex ideal for compliance induction in the interests of contemporary neoliberal regimes.

Definition

Rather than, at the outset of this entry, answering the question “What is community psychology?” by selecting one of the many different definitions of community psychology offered in textbooks, in journal articles, on web sites, etc.,

by different interest groups in various locations at various times, we would prefer to support the uncovering and challenging of forms of authority deployed to legitimize claims as to what community psychology “is”; ways definitions of community psychology have been constituted, legitimated, and maintained; implications of some versions of community psychology becoming dominant and others subjugated; etc. In brief, rather than reinscribing definitions, we resist them and thereby, of course, try to resist the interconnected discourses, techniques, practices, knowledge-claim-legitimizing strategies, professional guilds, training courses, awards, etc., which have been positioned as constituting community psychology by some interest groups. The important question to answer is not “What is community psychology?” but rather “What could community psychologies be?” For a fuller explanation of these issues, see Fryer and Laing (2008).

Keywords

Critical psychology; colonisation; psy-complex; neoliberalism

History

Community psychologies, versions of community psychology, are established in, at least, Australia, Canada, Central and South America, many European countries, Latin America, New Zealand, and South Africa. Many of these have their own community psychology origin stories. However, it is United-Statesian community psychology which tends to contain the most vigorous claims that the historical origins of community psychology are to be found within its own national borders. Because there are more textbooks of community psychology, more professors of community psychology, more courses in community psychology, more postgraduate students, and more community psychology journals which are highly KPI (Key Performance Indicator) rated in the USA than anywhere else, these origin claims are widely disseminated and reinforced.

The 1965 Boston Conference on the Education of Psychologists for Community Mental Health (usually referred to as the Swampscott Conference) is widely claimed by United Statesians to be the “founding event” of the field (e.g., Meritt, Greene, Jopp, & Kelly, 1999). Apart from Swampscott, the US civil rights movement, the US women’s movement, the Kennedy-Johnson administration’s “war on poverty,” the resistance within the USA to the war being waged on North Vietnamese people, the return of US soldiers from overseas wars, and the developments in the USA in the community mental health movement tend to be positioned by United Statesians as factors contributing to the foundation of community psychology. For multiple examples, please see Rappaport and Seidman (2000). Ironically, even those asking the critically important question – why has US community psychology not “incorporated a feminist agenda more fully into research, theory, and practice?” – and arguing the critically important thesis that a “feminist agenda would strengthen community psychology” reproduce the same origin story and standpoint: “The two domains share a historical context and significant theoretical assumptions – e.g. the importance of empowerment for social change” (Mulvey, 1988: abstract).

Fryer (2008a) drew attention to pioneering intervention research carried out in Europe in the early 1930s, more than three decades before Swampscott. In a small town outside Vienna, Marie Jahoda, Paul Lazarsfeld, and a large multidisciplinary team focused on the psychological consequences of unemployment on a whole community rather than on unemployed individuals, concluding that the whole community had resigned itself to decline. The study involved participatory problematization, a non-hierarchical multidisciplinary team, eclectic methods including action research, etc. (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, & Zeisel, 2002; Lazarsfeld-Jahoda, & Zeisel, 1933). However, Fryer’s account of community psychology in central Europe in the 1930s was not offered to replace a problematic US-centric origin claim with an equally problematic Euro-centric one; rather, it was offered to

unsettle the taken-for-grantedness of US claims about the origins and history of community psychology. The discipline, that is, the disciplinary practices of (community) psychology, is bedevilled by the writing of what Canguilhem (cited in Rose, 1998, p. 42) called “recurrent history,” which legitimizes a contingent and local version of the discipline by reference to alleged necessary historical roots. By positioning United-Statesian community psychology as originating in part from, e.g., the Vietnam War protest movement and civil rights movements in the USA, United-Statesian community psychology is positioned as progressive in origin. In contrast, “a critical history is one that helps us think ... about the conditions under which that which we take for truth and reality has been established ... it reveals the fragility of that which seems solid, the contingency of that which seemed necessary ... it enables us to think against the present” (Rose, p. 41), i.e., is a source for radical transformation. Community psychologies are desperately in need of critical histories.

Traditional Debates

The notion of “traditional debates” in community psychology is problematic because of the international dominance of United-Statesian community psychology. For example, there is a wide repeated, albeit largely consensual, debate concerning the importance of refocusing from person to community or at least person in community; methodological eclecticism; multilevel “ecological” analysis and intervention; prevention rather than treatment; “empowerment”; emphasis on the expertise of community members and nonprofessionals; etc., and community psychologists spend much time talking and writing about “values” and positioning themselves as progressive vis-a-vis mainstream psychologists (see Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2001; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Orford, 1992; Thomas & Veno, 1996), but a common source for much of this is United Statesian and especially the hugely influential book by Julian Rappaport (1977). A fascinating example of this dominant discourse is the Wikipedia entry on

community psychology (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_psychology). This is totally dominated by a United Statesian, and in particular SCRA version, of community psychology. It is instructive to visit the Wikipedia page and look at the history of changes via the “view history” tab.

Even though most community psychologists are also mainstream psychologists (often clinical, organizational, educational/school, or health psychologists), they engage frequently in modest criticism of mainstream psychology and clinical psychology but refrain from critique of community psychology itself. A traditional pursuit at community psychology conferences and on community psychology discussion lists is the positioning of critical psychology as doctrinaire, inaccessible, jargon ridden, and irrelevant in practice (there are countless examples on the UK community psychology discussion list and the SCRA list – see online resources for links).

Critical Debates

What is it to Be Critical as a Psychologist in Relation to Community Psychology?

For some community psychologists to be critical is to engage with oppression. Some community psychologists are critical in relation to oppression at a community level, engaging with, for example, the consequences of growing material and health inequalities, pathogenic housing, homelessness, disability, psychiatric abuse, domestic violence, racism, heteronormativity, and toxic employment and employment. From a critical standpoint, however, while necessary, this is not enough: it is also necessary to extend critique into theorization, methodology, intervention, the interests served by different knowledges, etc. See Fryer (2008b) for a critique of a community psychological theorization of power, Fryer and Laing (2008) for a critique of a community psychology approach to disability, and Fryer (*in press*) for a critique of community psychological work on unemployment.

For some community psychologists to be critical is to position community members as “experts” and to position “lived experience” as

an authentic guide to what is the case. From a critical standpoint, the “community member expertise” is as problematically constituted by dominant oppressive discourses as any other form of expertise, and “lived experience” is a consequence of constituting discourses rather than an authentic site for contesting them.

For some community psychologists to be critical is to develop community psychologies informed by Marxism or psychoanalysis. However, from a radically critical standpoint, the oeuvres of Marx and Freud are examples of modernist grand narratives, and, like all psychologies, psychoanalysis is as much a manifestation of the psy-complex central to governmentality and the production of the compliant neoliberal subject as any other form of psy.

Critical psychologists who offer critique of community psychology often position it as under-theorized, pragmatic to the point of compromise, and as ideologically problematic as any other version of psy (though of course the latter point also applies to critical psychology). Although Foucault focused on psychiatry rather than psychology, his critique has been extended by Nikolas Rose and others (e.g., Stompe & Fryer, 2013) to psychology in all its forms and indeed to the psy-complex (“the heterogeneous knowledges, forms of authority and practical techniques that constitute psychological expertise”; Rose, 1999, p. vii) which does not just describe psychological life but constructs it and in doing so plays a role in constructing and maintaining compliant subjectivities. Rose has already subjected the battlefield, the workplace, and the family to Foucauldian critique. Foucauldian critique of the community is timely.

Most community psychologies rhetorically at least prioritize engagement with “power” but that engagement is often uncritical, despite claims to the contrary. Concluding a critical examination of one framing of power within an influential community psychology frame of reference, Fryer (2008b) concluded that “the notion of power recommended has been found to be ill-defined, circular, question-begging, problematic in terms of community psychology with its dependence on need satisfaction, rooted in an

underlying interpersonal relationship model, infected with individualism and psychologism, and problematically stuck within the old debate about agency and structure. It is suggested that power is better understood as a property, or dynamic, of social systems than of the individuals within it and that the apparent power of individuals is best understood as the subjective manifestation of the societal distribution of power” (Fryer, 2008b, p. 243). Although most community psychologies require a commitment to empowerment, Parker (2007, p. 143) points out that in relation to funded research, “The community psychologist has to work within the constraints of an agenda that is defined outside of the particular community they choose to work with ... in this way the funding agendas lead to a closer monitoring and reporting of what a community is up to that is nearer to social control than ‘empowerment.’”

Community psychology rhetoric emphasizes transparency and accountability, but, as Parker observes, pragmatic issues to do with community psychologists being obliged to “gain access” to a community, usually via “representatives of the community,” and to avoid being ejected (to safeguard the research to outcomes of which they are committed by funding agreements) result in “patterns of violence that usually remain hidden” not being illuminated by community psychologists’ research either. “The community psychologist is very quickly caught in the trap of ratifying existing power structures in a community... Those who are happy to work with the researchers thus maintain the silence and oppression of those who might cause trouble for the notion that they are really a ‘community’” writes Parker (2007, pp. 144–145). Coimbra et al. (2012) suggest that “community” can be used to justify othering and subordination and that the very notion of community, and how it is deployed, is in need of critique.

More generally, the dominant, especially United Statesian, forms of community psychology draw on the mainstream Anglo-Saxon positivist modernist psychological disciplinary tradition, literatures, and frames of reference rather than subjugated, poststructural, and

postmodern ones (Coimbra et al., 2012, p. 139). Seedat, Duncan, and Lazarus (2001, p. 4) argue that “Community Psychology in the northern hemisphere has tended to assume an accommodationist position seeking greater influence within the mainstream fraternity without necessarily challenging the restrictions and outcomes imposed by exploitative economic arrangements and dominant systems of knowledge production In contrast ... in South Africa, community psychology as it formally emerged in the 1980s embraced a radical challenge to the discriminatory foundation, method and practice of psychology. Community psychology was accordingly identified as the ‘promise’ that would ‘liberate’ South African psychology from the discriminatory approaches and hegemonic and epistemological domination evident in Euro-American psychology” (though for a fascinating critique of South African community psychology in relation to the operation of intersections of gender and race privileges, see Carolissen & Swartz, 2009). Moreover, engagement with subjugated knowledges does not guarantee radical community psychology. As Parker points out, although “The work of Seve, that of Holzkamp and that of Foucault still operate as reference points for resistance to Western psychology .. they have also been depoliticised” and “Even the work of Martin-Baro, which shows how genuine understanding of the nature of oppression can be developed through the process of revolution, can be formalised and incorporated into conservative ‘community psychology’” (Parker, 2007, p. 164).

International Relevance

“International Community Psychology: History and Theories” (Reich, Riemer, Prilleltensky, & Montero, 2007) includes chapters “about” community psychologies in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Argentina, Australia, Britain, Cameroon, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latin America, Norway, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay, and the USA. Although the book does offer some accounts of diverse community

psychologies from around the world, reading it also underlines the extent of international intellectual colonization by United-Statesian community psychology. The chapter in community psychology in Poland (Bokszczanin, Kaniasty, and Szarzynska, 2007, pp. 350–355), for example, has only one reference: Dalton, Elias, and Wandersman (2001), a United-Statesian textbook. This textbook is mentioned in relation to a survey done by the authors, sent to “all departments of psychology in all major Polish universities and colleges as well as to the most prominent psychological association, organisations and interest groups” (Bokszczanin, Kaniasty, and Szarzynska, 2007, p. 352). Respondents were asked to provide “their own definition of community psychology.” The authors write: “To assess the fidelity of these definitions, we used as an anchor a broad definition of CP as a discipline seeking to ‘understand and to enhance quality of life for individuals, communities, and society.’” In a footnote, Bokszczanin, Kaniasty, and Szarzynska tellingly add: “We chose Dalton et al.’s definition because of its elegant inclusiveness of the multitude of aims and values generally associated with community psychology in the West!”

The book by Reich et al. (2007) is also as interesting for what it excludes as for what it includes. A chapter on “Community Psychology in Israel” is included, yet there is no mention of community psychology in Palestine. The authors of the chapter on Israeli community psychology, Raviv, Zeira, and Sharvit (2007, pp. 335–349), write, “despite the small number of publications using the specific term, Israeli psychologists are familiar with the principles of CP and apply them extensively. The principles of community psychology, to which we shall refer throughout the chapter, are based on the principles delineated by Levine and Perkins (1997) and mainly include early identification, prevention, mental health consultation, crisis intervention, and the use of community resources and strengths” (Reich et al., 2007, p. 335). Here we see United-Statesian community psychology being transposed in its entirety to the Middle East. Palestinian community psychologist, Ibrahim Makkawi, of Birzeit

University, on the other hand, writing in the *Journal of Critical Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy*, suggests “it is possible to place the various traditions of community psychology on a continuum, where at the individualistic and reductionist end of the continuum we can locate the USA school of community psychology, whereas, at the transformative and liberationist end of the continuum we locate the Latin American school of community psychology... community psychology may well be perceived as the psychology of liberation of oppressed people” (Makkawi, 2009, p. 76). Drawing upon Murray, Nelson, Poland, Maticka-Tyndale, and Ferris (2004), Makkawi suggests “three influential roots of the Latin American school of community psychology” with which he identifies Palestinian community psychology: “rejection of the North American school of social psychology due to its experimental nature and detachment from real life social problems,” enactment as “part of the broader national liberation movements,” and “Paolo Freire’s (1970) radical philosophy and liberation education as praxis.” Drawing upon Hernandez (2002), Makkawi summarizes some “common ground” amongst Latin American approaches and Palestinian community psychology: “(a) acknowledge the socio-political nature of traumatic experiences, b) take a position against repression and state violence, c) name the source of oppression, d) assist people in the reconstruction of their lives, e) rely on community-based approaches for therapy and education, and f) link therapeutic work with human rights and activism” (p. 335) (Hernandez cited in Makkawi, 2009). The critical differences in the community psychology frames of reference presented by Raviv, Zeira, and Sharvit (2007) and Makkawi (2009) are glaring even without going into the particularities of problems addressed and means and resources available to address them.

It is impossible to discuss international relevance in relation to community psychology without mentioning intellectual colonization (Rivera Santana 2013) and globally hegemonic discourses. The most obvious manifestation of this is the dominance of United-Statesian

community psychology, but note also the role ascribed to Latin American intellectuals in Palestine in Makkawi's account. Much decolonizing theory itself draws on Freudian psychoanalysis, Marxist theory, and Foucauldian scholarship. On the other hand, the "national" and the "international" are themselves manifestations of the ascendancy of the nation-state over other social, cultural, and political identities and often a consequence of colonization. Multiple diasporas and cycles of colonization and recolonization, not to mention globalization, have arguably rendered the notion of "nation-state" obsolete.

Practice Relevance

When students come across them, community psychologies usually seem very different from "institutional psychologies," the psychologies which are dominant in universities, psychiatric institutions, and clinics, and at least some community psychologies are radically different. Where it is taught, community psychology can open a space in the undergraduate psychology degree for some degree of critique and the employment of critical psychologists, whereas critical psychology is much more difficult to get into the accredited undergraduate syllabus. Community psychology conferences provide spaces for critical subgroups to meet and debate (the European Community Psychology Association has a critical interest group). Community psychology sections or divisions or colleges (according to country) of professional psychology organizations do exist in a number of countries, allowing critical voices to potentially influence national policy. In practice, the radicality of critique which flourishes in such spaces is modest, and community psychologists are as prone, maybe more, to close critique down as any other constitutions of the psy-complex.

Future Directions

Community psychology is likely – if current trends continue – to become increasingly

deradicalized. The increasing dominance of largely acritical United-Statesian community psychologies and increasing professionalization and bureaucratization of community psychologies, through which community psychologies are recuperated into the mainstream discipline, are endangering the survival of progressive alternatives to the disciplinary knowledges, technologies, and practices of mainstream psychology.

Despite the rhetoric of community psychologists, for example, one widely used textbook is titled "Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010), more radical, effective, progressive, and vigorous community interventions are carried out by community activists (e.g., Eleftheriades, 2008; McCormack, 2009) and critical developmental psychologists (e.g., Burman & Chantler, 2005), more sophisticated investigations of the transformation of communities and the implications for the remaking of subjects are being done by transdisciplinary critical ethnographers (e.g., Biehl, Good, & Kleinman, 2007), and more radical and sophisticated theorizing of subjection is done by critical social theorists and philosophers like Butler (1997) than by psychologists. The future of community psychology may well lie outside of community psychology and probably outside of psychology altogether.

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Online Resources

- British Psychological Society Community Psychology Section: <http://cps.bps.org.uk/>
- European Community Psychology Association: <http://www.ecpa-online.eu/>
- Society for Community Research and Action / Division 27 of the American Psychological Association: <http://www.scra27.org/>
- Society for Community Research and Action / Division 27 of the American Psychological Association list serves: <http://www.scra27.org/about/elistserves>
- UK Community psychology discussion list: <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=COMMUNITYPSYCHUK>

Conduct of Everyday Life

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Introduction

From its formation as an independent discipline, psychology has been concerned with human self-reflection, but the question of how to conduct one's life has not been of much significance in mainstream psychology. On the background of the work of Max Weber and subject-orientated sociologists, critical psychologists in recent years incorporated the concept of the conduct of everyday life into psychological theory and practice. Some critical psychologists have even suggested defining the topic of psychology not as the individual subject, or the subject in social relations, but the subject within the context of her/his conduct of everyday life (e.g., Holzkamp, 2013, p. 314). The concept involves studying psychological processes as people's experiences and actions within the social and material contexts of their everyday lives. It expands psychological theory and research to explore people's collective participations in everyday practice and their efforts to handle the activities, relations, conditions, concerns, and struggles in life. The concept embodies the idea of a critical psychology from the standpoint of the subject. Such an approach roots its inquiry in the subjective meanings and reasons for action that are involved in persons' conduct of life and aims to contribute to the dialogues among people on how to live one's life in contemporary society. Today the concept is used in a variety of different theoretical, methodological, and empirical fields of research, for example, research on therapy, gender relations, health promotion, homeless people, child development across different institutional settings, or on the significance of technology in people's conduct of life.

Definition

The concept of the conduct of life articulates the subjective experience, thoughts, and actions involved in people's creation and organization of their activities, tasks, projects, and participations in and across different social contexts in the fabric of everyday life. It is a key concept for understanding people's active efforts in conducting and organizing their day-to-day activities. It directs attention to the social conditions in which people participate and live their everyday life and includes the question of how people are subjected to socio-material dispositions of power, knowledge, and discourse. It also takes into account how people make and live their everyday life in the patterns of daily activities, routines, and personal arrangements of things and social relations.

Psychological research on the conduct of life takes a situated approach to the activities, practices, localities, and relations of persons across distinct social contexts. Based on the first-person perspectives of the subjects involved (Schraube, 2013), it focuses on how people act and move in their everyday world, experience and learn from it, and engage in a particular sequence and priority of activities and relations along the way. For example, the personal movements of homeless persons "walking the streets" can be understood as crucial for structuring their everyday life under difficult and volatile social conditions, for their exploration of opportunities for a better life and for finding ways out of trouble (Kristensen, 2008). The cross-contextuality of the conduct of life is further specified by the idea of "personal trajectories of participation" (Dreier, 2008), expressing how persons configure as an ongoing concern their movements and participations in and through the social structures of their everyday practice. This is supplemented by the idea of "institutional trajectories of participation" (Dreier), which highlights the institutionally structured programs, schedules, tasks, and goals and how they are connected with the individual subject's conduct of life, for example, the scheduled educational program embodied in

a curriculum which students are meant to participate in and learn over time and in relation to which they develop a personal trajectory of participation.

Keywords

Everyday life; experience; first-person perspective; social self-understanding; subjectivity; trajectories of participation; psychology from the standpoint of the subject

Traditional and Critical Debates

Establishing a conduct of everyday life means that people do not have to scrutinize and doubt every aspect of what they are doing as they go along. It creates practical and cyclical routines and regular arrangements providing a possible framework to resolving everyday practical tasks and demands. The conduct of everyday life incorporates an “arrangement of the arrangements” (Voß, 1991) which has taken on an everyday repetitive and systematic quality. Consequently, this reduces the need for attention and negotiation, enabling people to concern themselves with those projects and problems requiring most effort, learning, struggle, and reflection (Holzkamp, 1995). Since everyday routines become an ordinary and obvious part of people’s lives, they also have a comforting quality. The idea of a cyclical setup of routine activities has been critically discussed. It may simplify our understanding of people’s everyday life by downplaying its possible variations and its open-ended and changing character, and it may overlook how routines are not performed in an identical manner, but rather for different reasons and in various ways in the shifting setups of daily activities (Dreier, 2008, p. 186, 2011). Furthermore, the scope of the concept has been elaborated to conceptualize in more detail how persons engage in conducting a multitude of activities, tasks, and relations in daily life with quite different scales of socio-spatial-temporal reach (Hodgetts et al., 2010; Kristensen, 2008;

Osterkamp, 2001). Other debates are concerned with ways of expanding the concept to the wider experiential horizon of meaning and expectations in a life trajectory from which people reflect on their activities.

In the twenty-first century the conduct of life is becoming increasingly a matter of not only personal but also social and political interest and concern. The growing individualization of the organization of social life and of core institutions (such as family, education, and work) places new demands on people’s conduct of everyday life. Individual life appears as a social project and a possible social problem subject to comprehensive societal interests as well as institutional and governmental interventions. The scholarly interest in the concept might then itself be an expression of a slide towards individualistic discourses of human life. There are good reasons to be wary of research and knowledge of how persons conduct their lives, since such knowledge could be valuable for monitoring, disciplining, and regulating the life of others. However, the forces of individualization and governing of others could also precisely be uncovered by how people experience these ideologies and social changes in the conduct of their everyday lives and by how people work on transforming them. In a critical psychological framework, research on the conduct of life of individual subjects cannot be driven by calculating and controlling rationales or interests, but aims at contributing to a social self-understanding about how we, as individuals and as collectives, are involved in as well as subjected to the powers, forces, and complexities of our shared everyday life.

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Confession, Overview

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Introduction

In the context of critical psychology, the term “confession” signifies a node in the conceptual apparatus of Foucault’s writings on subjectivity and power. The term is blatantly borrowed from the context of pastoral power/care where it refers to ritual practice that includes penance and the presence of another “who is not simply an interlocutor but the agency that requires the confession, imposes it, weighs it, and intervenes to judge, punish, pardon, console, reconcile” (Foucault, 1976, pp. 61–62).

Foucault’s use of confession, including its implications for penance, redemption, and freedom (from sin), fits well with the workings of disciplinary power. Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power is metaphorized through Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon. The panopticon is an architectural design for a model prison where

cells are arranged around a central guard tower, from which each prisoner can be observed when the tower is occupied. The particular cleverness of Bentham’s design is that the tower is backlit so that the prisoners in their separate cells, divided from each other, cannot tell whether they are actually monitored or not. The structural arrangement of the prison architecture incites prisoners to supervise themselves and discipline their own conduct – in case they’re being monitored. The panopticon serves as an analogy for discursive processes through which individuals become conscious of themselves as subjects of normalized discourse who are accountable for their actions in terms that are acceptable to others. Thus, disciplinary power acts on the actions of the body, through self-surveillance, and simultaneously enables and constrains the ways in which personhood is able to be articulated through discourse.

Theories of power that presume power operates through the personal attributes or institutional role of individuals conceive of power negatively, as when a judicial authority censors, represses, or prohibits the actions of citizens. Unlike these theories, Foucault’s conception of disciplinary power is positive in the sense that it construes power as productive rather than limiting.

From a Foucauldian perspective, subjects are incited to enact disciplinary power through speaking of their past and thereby giving an account of themselves. Psy-discourse often incites clients and research participants to produce a confession. Foucault’s interpretation of the practice of confession refers to the paradigmatic “talking cure” of psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapies. “The cure” is predicated on the assumption of a deeply internalized and secret “truth” that will be revealed by speaking it before the authority of analytic experts.

For Foucault, the practice of confession is enabled by discourse. Discourses, broadly understood as coherent bodies of statements that form the objects of which they speak and position subjects as they are spoken, formulate the rules which specify how knowledge and truth may be claimed. In relation to confession, they are the

groups of statements that enable a person to perceive a sensible inner truth and articulate it acceptably. Discourses thus enable intensely felt needs to be produced and experienced through confessional practices (Parker, 1989). At the same time, the subject positioned as expert within a confessional encounter is enabled to affirm, diagnose, or exclude accounts of deeply felt need or hidden inner truth.

Definition

Foucault offers at least two ways of defining confession. In one instance he says confession is “[t]o declare aloud and intelligibly the truth of oneself” (Foucault, 1993, p. 201). This definition proposes confession as a speech act that produces a lucid truth about “who one is.” In another instance he says confession is a “ritual of discourse where the subject who speaks corresponds with the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual which unfolds in a relation of power, since one doesn’t confess without the presence, at least the virtual presence, of a partner who is not simply an interlocutor” (Foucault, 1976, pp. 61–62). This definition highlights the social encounter of conversation and the structural relationship between “who one is” and how one is spoken. In confession the speaker is structured as the subject of the sentence and positioned in a power relationship with an actual or imagined confessor who sanctions their actions. The disciplinary power of self-surveillance enables the subject to monitor their own actions which enables them to speak the “truth of who they are” in the ritual of confession.

Foucault’s work never arrives at a final definition of confession. Instead, his use of the term circles issues of disciplinary power and the production of subjects and considers various regimes of self-surveillance and rituals of discourse.

Keywords

Confession; discourse; power; subjectivity; ethics; liberty

Critical Debates

In a lecture given in 1975, Foucault uses the ritual of confession to turn the “problem of sexuality” from one of censorship to one of the “obligatory and forced discourse” of sexuality at work in the “institutionalized practices” of “psychiatry, psychoanalysis, sexology” (Foucault, 2003, p. 170). Foucault’s writings are often interpreted as specific interventions into the politics and power relationships that divide us and produce subjects on the margins of society: the mentally ill, the incarcerated, and homosexuals. For Foucault, sex and sexuality were critical sites of political struggle over the commonly assumed “truths” and “nature” of human subjectivity, and he regarded normalizing sexual discourse as too costly and constraining (Sawicki, 2010). In this view, he is sometimes presented as sharing “common ground” with western feminisms, though there are extensive critiques of Foucault’s work within feminist literature. Of crucial importance to these critiques are the philosophical, moral, and political implications of autonomy and agency. Some view Foucault’s conceptual apparatus and investigations of the production of subjectivity as positing bodies so docile that the autonomy and agency necessary for political action appears impossible (Allen, 2004). Others have found Foucault’s apparatus too negative, or without sufficient commitment to values/ideals, or lacking space for the presumption of an identity that preconditions political interests. They have interpreted Foucault’s work as endorsing relativism and undermining collective political action.

Feminists, who have taken up some of the conceptual apparatus provided by Foucault, have shared his interest in the kind of social problems that have historically produced marginalized and excluded subjectivities and taken them as natural, normalized, ways of being (see for example, Lister, 2003). Among those who have seen possibilities in Foucault’s work for unpicking the threads of history, morality, and politics that make problems of sex and gender, there is a shared value in critical inquiry into the historical limits of human conceptualizations of subjectivity. By this account, rather than taking

autonomy and agency as the “grounds” of political action, they are transformed into contemporary limits of conceptualizing forms of political action: limits that invite inquiry into their conditions of possibility and the forms of subjectivity they produce. From this perspective Foucault’s work produces political action rather than undermining it.

For instance, say a specific act of confession spoken by a woman in the transaction of feminist therapy gave an account of sexual practices involving other people that exceeded the number of persons that hetero normative discourse provides as a threshold for limits on women’s sexual pleasures. (The number is arbitrary, shifting, and changing from generation to generation, sliding along some scale of magnitude that signifies sexual propriety.) It is possible that the agency requiring this confession could deduce the number and authorize it as an account of autonomous defiance of heteronormativity. In this case, the “confession” would be understood as a personal account of political liberation and an act of resistance to “thresholds” defining women’s sexual behaviors. However, authorizing this account would also close down the possibility inquiring into the discourses that are setting the thresholds and authorizing the limits of women’s sexual priority. It might also affirm the production of a marginalized subject position without engaging ethical techniques of (self) care. Autonomy and agency become principles inscribed through inequitable power relations, and they delimit the kind of freedoms Foucault advocates.

The relationship between confession and freedom traverses a historical trajectory from the significance of self-transformation among Greek and Roman civilizations, through the coercive institutions of (among others) psy-discourse and religious practice, to a questioning of “liberation” (from sin, repression). Foucault associates freedom with an ethic of care for the self that necessarily involves care for the other. Political acts of liberation may too easily become tyranny, not freedom, if care of the self does not also involve care of the other. The freedom Foucault advocates is liberty understood as “the ontological

condition of ethics” (Fornet-Betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Müller & Gauthier, 1987, p. 115). By such an account, the kind of coercive practice of confession that serves as an apparatus of asymmetrical power relationships, the kind Foucault ascribes to psy-discourse, is neither ethical nor liberating.

Another thread of debate about Foucault’s writings on confession specifically concerns his treatment of psychoanalysis as too sweeping, too static, too focused on its disciplinary character, and not attending adequately to its possibilities as a technique of self-care (Taylor, 2009). Yet it is also possible to argue that the critique offered by Foucault’s writings opens up new possibilities for self-transformation and new forms of political action. Foucault’s critique of contemporary confessional practices in psy-discourse enables us to consider its possibilities as a technique of self-care.

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Online Resources

<http://www.academyanalyticarts.org/milch&rosen.htm>
<http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.technologiesOfSelf.en.html>

Conscientization

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Introduction

Conscientization is a neologism, coming from the Spanish word *conscientización*. It conveys the idea of developing, strengthening, and changing consciousness. It was created in the field of education, specifically of adult education, in the early 1960s, producing at the same time a new conception of consciousness. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire was the first to spread its use, although at the same time Alvaro Vieira Pinto (1961), a close colleague, was producing ideas very near to those Freire introduced in his first published work, *Education as Practice of Liberty* (1964, 1970 in its English translation). Freire provided the first definition of the concept of conscientization, linking it to social sciences, to participatory modes of practice, and to the concept of liberation as a daily task able to be carried out by any person. By the mid-1970s and early 1980s, critical theories developed in the field of psychology included the concept of consciousness along with transformation practices.

Definition

Conscientization is the “process in which, in the relationship subject-object, the subject becomes able to perceive in critical terms, the dialectic unity between him [sic] and the object. There is no conscientization out of praxis, out of the unity theory-practice, out of the relationship reflection-action” (Freire, 1963, 1964, pp. 97–113; 1973). A definition constructed in the field of psychology

is that it is the complex and liberating “mobilization of consciousness aiming to produce critical historical knowledge about oneself, and about the groups to which one belongs, thereby producing a new understanding and giving sense to one’s temporal and spatial place in society, from one’s specific lifeworld” (Montero, 2009, pp. 72–73).

The complex and dynamic character of the concept resides in the subprocesses being produced in order to reach the liberating end. It means the de-habitation, de-naturalization, and problematization of habits and knowledge that so far were neither questioned, nor even thought about, because they were considered as the way certain things are. Actually, each of the three main subprocesses are also complex, and all of them are linked to de-alienation and de-ideologizing processes.

Daily life is in a great part something that happens in a nonconscious way, made of necessary actions that become habits, since they are carried out in a nearly automatic way. Habits are a needed part of daily routines, used to do things about which one does not think. They are the repeated movements and words allowing human beings to carry out other more important and demanding tasks, while they take care of the small gestures and chores of everyday. Those ordinary practices, ideas, beliefs, and conceptions can limit a person’s knowledge, or her/his capacities and actions that become fixed in the ways to live, think, and act.

This constitutes the phenomenon called habituation, defined as everyday acts neither requiring to be thought about nor needing to be planned, because they can be done without that. It supposes the employment of nonexpressed (codified or stated) social ways is implicitly linked to social expectations. Habituation facilitates social life because it spares us of the planning, reflecting, and decision making for many daily activities, including the maintenance of personal visions, opinions, and beliefs. This can be called common habituation. However, there is another form of habituation, one that can be called ideological because it may lead to reproduce in unreflective and uncritical ways, life circumstances that can be harmful for people.

Habituation may lead to naturalization, the process through which certain phenomena or certain patterns of behavior come to be considered as the natural and sometimes essential way to be in the world as an essential part of the nature of society. It can be aided by way of familiarization, a cognitive process helping to make what is strange, alien, or unknown assimilated to what is already known and accepted. De-naturalization is the critical examination of notions, beliefs, and procedures sustaining practices and beliefs considered as the ways things are to be done, showing their social constructed origin and their links with specific interests within a society.

Keywords

Consciousness; lifeworld; habituation; naturalization; de-naturalization; problematization; familiarization

History

The concept of conscientization has at its core the concept of consciousness; it could not be without it. The concept of conscientization, as it has been constructed in praxis, works with the way people think, with what people believe, and with the knowledge people have and use in their daily life. Almost simultaneously, it appeared in the early 1980s, developed by Freire's Adult Education (Freire, 1968/1981) and from O. Fals Borda's sociology. Fals Borda created a sociological movement in Colombia, introducing participation as a main concept for action (Fals Borda, 1986). Those influences were later evident in the interest manifested within social psychology in a few Latin American countries in the late 1970s, giving way to the construction (still ongoing) of a community psychology oriented by participation, transformation, and liberation; and from 1986 and until his violent death in 1989, by Ignacio Martín-Baró. This author proposed as main tasks of liberation psychology: "to foster a way to seek for truth [that has been

interpreted as developing a deeper understanding of social life circumstances] within the population masses" and "to create a new psychological practice in order to transform both people and societies, acknowledging their denied potential" (Martín-Baró, 1986, p. 22). Conscientization, as constructed in educational, political, community, environmental, and liberation psychology, is not just a thinking way, but it is a way to think produced at the same time by people and by psychologists working with them, while developing forms of practice in order to transform their daily life.

The concept of conscientization substituted the denomination first used in the early 1990s when this sort of practice and research, interventions, and discussions were referred to as consciousness raising. This denomination was put aside as the development of liberation psychology and also of methods for consciousness were being constructed, demonstrating that it is not something someone raises in someone else, inasmuch as everyone already has a consciousness. Rather, it is a specific way to change that consciousness through dialogue in a non contentious way. Conscientization refers to a practice proposed and developed in the last decade (see Montero, 2009, 2012a) as the outcome of a relationship between two or more individuals. It is considered as part of the episteme of relatedness (Dussel, 1985; Moreno, 1993).

Critical Debates

Inasmuch as conscientization comes from a critical theory and is relatively new, it is difficult to talk of tradition or traditional aspects. There has been no time yet for a tradition. But there is a debate in which conscientizing attacks traditional ways of conceiving our ways to perceive, believe, and understand daily life. Consciousness (see "► [Consciousness, Overview](#)" entry) and conscientization are concepts opposing traditional processes considered as alienating. That is, considering that the things that one owns, one does, and one believes are

exactly as one has been taught. Those beliefs may distort views of society and the ways good and evil things happen to people.

Marxian ideas are responsible for the negative idea of alienation. And although alienation and consciousness have changed and they have been defined in new ways (see “► [Consciousness, Overview](#)” entry), the conscientizing processes can be contrasted with everyday life processes that may be understood in different ways. Thus, mechanical objectivism is contrasted by the concept of praxis, a concept that includes both what is being done and its understanding, so forms of naïve consciousness are opposed by critical consciousness; disempowerment is opposed by empowerment; resistance goes against fragmentation of social information; social fragmentation is opposed by capacity building; participation confronts control of knowledge production; marginalization is contrasted with independent decision-making; constructing and strengthening go against clientelism and dependency; citizenship should be the contrary of de-politization; politization would contrast contextualization; dehistorization would unmask mythologization; de-mythologizing would counter ideological habituation; de-naturalization should be against noncritical naturalization, and essentialization should be opposed by de-essentialization. Finally, de-ideologization would be the contrary to alienation.

International Relevance

The concept of conscientization began to spread in the mid-1980s, in certain places in some Latin American nations that were the first to use Freire’s concepts and apply them to community and to social psychology (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela). By the end of the 1990s, the idea of conscientization as part of transformational praxis used in community psychology had reached almost all Latin American countries (Argentina, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Perú, and Uruguay began to develop such ideas) were using, in some places, the concept.

In Canada, some community psychologists (i.e., Chataway, Prilleltensky) were introducing ideas related to this concept. Freire himself had introduced his work in Africa, but much of what he did in Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau has been lost, although there are scholars and practitioners using it in South Africa. The seed was spread to India (Pareek, Sinha) and Germany (Kramer, Moser), not in the field of psychology but in other social sciences such as sociology and anthropology, which were already using developments generated in Latin America such as participatory action-research and Freire’s pedagogy. There are nuclei following these ideas in certain Nordic countries, but it has spread slowly. And one cannot talk of critical debates unless one is referring to the critique that those using this type of concepts, have regarding traditional psychological theories and concepts.

Practice Relevance

Julio Barreiro, a disciple of Freire, in 1986 presented four stages in the process of conscientizing, as follows:

- (a) Conscientization as the discovery of the dimension of the human being and the commitment with its consequences, leading to humanization of the people and of the world.
- (b) Conscientization as the conquest of transitive-critical consciousness along a progressive scale of related discoveries. In this stage, there is awareness of being oppressed and of being able to produce transformations, along with openness to dialogue;
- (c) Conscientization as the passage of an oppressed consciousness to a consciousness of oppression. Here the person puts the emphasis on the unjust and polarized condition of oppression.
- (d) Consciousness as the emergence from an oppressed existence towards the consciousness of the oppressed, which leads to liberation (see Barreiro, [1986/1974](#)).

Regarding practices, in the field of psychology the conscientization process has produced

a methodological response. There are many specific subprocesses in the process of conscientization. That is part of its complexity. Some of the main ones are the object of independent studies, as is the case of de-ideologizing and de-alienation. These, and processes such as de-habitation and de-naturalization, along with those previously mentioned in the Critical Debates section, have been organized in a general methodological overarching process called problematization. All these processes participate in the problematization method, although that does not mean there is a fixed sequence.

Problematization has been defined as a process of critical analysis of life circumstances and the role performed in them by the individual, questioning the usual and established explications (Montero, 2012b). Dialogue is problematization's main resource; it is a questioning dialogue, not contentious, but posing questions until there is silence; a silence conducive to the construction of new knowledge, liberated of received but nonexplained responses, revealing contradictions and hidden interests. This leads to a critical consciousness and liberation from unfair and oppressive situations. Or as Freire said (1970, p. 85), to a "Consciousness of consciousness," a meta-cognitive process initiated in the gnoseologic act through which, the object being known, rather than being the end of the knowing act, is the mediator between cognizant subjects.

Future Directions

Very little can be said about a future that is happening now. Now is the future for critical ideas. And if critique can carry out its social and epistemological task, it will be doing conscientization as a critical praxis. All critique should begin by self-critique, and by paying attention and analyzing other critiques. One can envision what may be a long way to go for conscientization ideas and practices. Translating ideas into praxis is not an easy task, but it has begun, and as usually happens, praxis may change many

things. Thus, one could expect to see the development, within psychology, of a diversity of ways to practice conscientization, including conscientization of consciousness.

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Online Resources

- Freire Institute. University of Central Lancashire, UK: <http://www.freire.org/conscientization/>
- Liberation Psychology. English Language Liberation Psychology: www.libpsy.org
- Mark Burton: www.compsy.org.uk/markburt.htm

Conscientization and Political Changes

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Introduction

*The conscientization is this:
taking possession of the reality*
– Paulo Freire

It seems clear and absolutely comprehensible to say that “conscientization” is taking possession of reality. But behind these words Paulo Freire indicated important ways in which the process of awareness becomes a key element for the constitution of the historical subject and struggle for freedom. One cannot speak about conscientization as a process of involving people in a form of knowledge that induces new ways of alienation. For this reason, this term has a special meaning with regard to the development of historical subjects, when people that could be able to build their life without being exploited and oppressed, were able to self-organize and fight for their rights.

Critical consciousness and responsible participation, referring to cultural, social, political and economic processes, has been much discussed, especially in references to education as liberating. In this sense, conscientization is a process that involves class consciousness, where ideology that perfuses daily life is, in many cases, impossible to acknowledge. Talking about consciousness is talking about education, especially in the process that allows individuals to take possession of reality, motivated through questioning, involvement, and commitment.

Human beings are socialized, through education, formal or not, individual or collective, along with other process. According to Paulo Freire (1979), this process can liberate and promote the individual or enslave and submit them according to forces and desires of others. For this reason,

conscientization enables people to take ownership of their own reality in order to modify it. One is not able to be aware of a reality without knowing it, without dominating its main dynamics, without developing ways of being engaged in it.

To change reality, the development of a conscientization process is necessary, and this is, for Ignacio Martín-Baró (1996), the main role of a critical psychologist in promoting well being and encouraging the transformation of the world. This work begins, necessarily, with the awareness of all involved in the specific professional and political action.

Definition

There is no English language translation for the word *conscientization*. In Portuguese, *conscientização* is the process of becoming aware of something. Here, *consciência* can be translated to English as consciousness or awareness. And the process is here considered as “conscientization.”

It is only possible to define awareness if including in the definition other elements, such as political analysis of the conjuncture, the limit situation, ideology, and praxis. For Paulo Freire (1980), awareness is taking hold of reality, a possible critical look that unveils the reality of oppression in a way of knowing and understanding certain myths and ideologies that foster and maintain the dominant structure. By becoming consciously aware, men and women usually find themselves facing different issues inside a dialectical contradiction. Some people work to maintain certain structures, which underpin the reality, while others want to change it. For a clear and consistent position it is necessary to perceive the antagonisms among many themes present in everyday life, from criticizing the world’s natural dynamic, revealing the reality, decoding the myth, de-ideologizing in order to realize the human labor and its release of the slavery condition, oppressed and exploited.

Quiñones Rosado (2007), based on Freire’s ideas, called this process “consciousness-in-action” – a socio-cognitive-emotional process of

perceiving, recognizing, understanding, and responding to internalized oppression through stages of social identity development. Despite the fact that Paulo Freire was an educator, not a psychologist, his method of promoting freedom through the process of becoming socially aware of reality contributed to the critical debate in Brazil in professional and scientific psychology.

This ongoing and permanent process requires an active presence in reality, which means that responses of men and woman should result in a historical act that contributes to important changes in the objective conditions of human life. The liberating actions presented in a particular historical context should not only reflect the generative themes of daily life but also the ways in which these issues are perceived and maintained; this is characterized as the political awareness process. Conscientization is, therefore, a path to liberation that seeks the humanization of life. This process presupposes the elimination of oppression and also the overcoming of limiting situations in which human individuals are reduced. This is a human critical attitude that should be permanent, not only for one dimension of reality but for all of them.

Keywords

Dialogue; freedom; experience; commitment; involvement; participation; popular education; subject; oppression; social classes; praxis

Traditional Debates

A major psychological theme is consciousness, a higher mental function that distinguishes humans from animals. Classical models of psychology are based on biological characteristics to explain the work of consciousness and, in most of them, human action is constituted in a relational process: “every individual is referred to a situation and every behavior to a circumstance” (Martín-Baró, 1977, p. 111).

Understanding and explaining human behavior only at the abstract level, postulating

a originator structure, such as temperament, character, or personality, loses sight of the essential historical character of individuals. Inside this mainstream psychology, the individual consciousness is attributed to biological roots. Despite the fact that consciousness is a cerebral function, the brain is not the source of consciousness. The primary factor of brain function, and therefore consciousness, is outside the body; it is the objective world. Thus, consciousness is a superior function of the brain and operates as a reflection of objective relations from the outside world. It consists of the mental structure of prior acts and operates in predicting outcomes of daily situations and the correct regulation and self-control of human interrelationships with the natural and social reality. Consciousness is inextricably linked to language and, therefore, it operates within social principles and not just on biological grounds. It is subject to nature and society; its organ is the brain. The personality is, therefore, the historical and concrete mediator. Its contents are reflected by the historically constituted knowledge system and its stimulus comes from human social needs; the role of knowledge is how to transform the social practice (Spirkin, 1977).

Critical Debate – Social and Political Meaning

The use of the term *conscientization*, according to Paulo Freire (1973, 1980, 1999, 2000), was a result of a merger between a term created by the professors at the Institute for Brazilian Studies in 1964 and the central concept of his own ideas on education, as the practice of freedom. It is, therefore, an act of knowledge and a critical approach to reality. With the spread of popular education, along with the the work of Paulo Freire in Brazil in the 1960s, it began to make sense that this process of liberating illiterate men and women, human praxis, is an indissoluble unity between action and reflection about the world.

The process of awareness cannot exist outside of “praxis” – action and reflection. It does not

mean an intellectual distortion, which is facing reality, but a commitment to changing history by those who assume the role of subject making and remaking the world and the life.

During this time, the popular education movement began and gained force in northeastern Brazil, especially in a condition of extreme poverty where 60 % of the population was illiterate. This reality mobilized those who associated the condition of exploitation and oppression with a consequent wealth concentration. These objective life conditions promoted social inequality, poverty, illiteracy, dependence, and a permanent state of slave labor. The movement for popular education grew in this historic context as a result of social and political actions.

This political situation made possible the rise of popular experiences of literacy in Brazil and led to the amazing result of having 300 workers becoming literate in 45 days. This result was considered by the masses as a right that could not be violated. The federal government decided to apply Paulo Freire's literacy method as a public policy priority to be implemented nationwide, providing resources and structure so that it could change the condition of illiteracy in the country. From June 1963 to March 1964 training courses were conducted for coordinators for literacy in most Brazilian capitals. It was a public policy that aimed to develop men and women through the process of awareness while learning how to read and write. Obviously, reactionary sectors of society, at the time, understood that this movement thought that the oppressed would be the germ of a rebellion; pedagogy of freedom would be a threat to the "status quo."

The formation of mass consciousness came to be understood by the dominant sectors as a dangerous strategy of subversion. In March 1964, the process of formation of popular educators and promoting awareness of the poor, oppressed, and illiterate was suspended and its creators and coordinators were harassed and arrested.

For the "populists" in Brazil, particularly, and Latin America, in general, the illiterate population was seen as a dangerous tool for the elections; every man or woman was considered as

a vote. If they were to become aware of their exploited and oppressed condition, it could act to change the reality. In this context, the illiterate population becomes an important element in democratic participation and the awareness process as a prerequisite for popular participation is the way toward liberation and not another form of slavery (Montero, 1987, 1994; Montero et al., 1996).

The main question regarding the awareness process has to do with the social and political issues. Through this process, people organize themselves to take control of their lives, not allowing their exploitation and oppression. The social life marked by inequality is lived through tension and conflict in all dimensions of daily life. A truly democratic society requires popular participation on equal terms, of rights and commitments. For Montero and colleagues (1996), popular participation involves processes of cooperation, solidarity, construction, and appropriation of reality by different social actors directly related to the control and power exercised in political contexts. Therefore, for participation to be effective it is necessary that social groups organize themselves consciously in a specific political direction. Therein lies the importance of awareness processes that result in community awareness and identity, leading to meeting the needs and goals shared by a particular social group. The main question for psychology is on which "side of the river the professional will stay" – maintaining the status quo or developing consciousness for political action.

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as truth, falseness, ideology, alienation, and their derivatives have the concept of consciousness at their core. There cannot be either an unconscious critique or an unconscious critical stance. Consciousness is the foundation for what makes human beings aware of being, of being in a world, and of being able to transform one's individuality, as well as that world.

Definition

Consciousness, as the capacity to reflect, is understood as a person's observing or noticing the internal operations of his/her mind and also of acquiring or producing ideas generating mental states. Those ideas include perceiving, thinking, doubting, reasoning, knowing, willing, and learning about those mental states. Consciousness is also defined as the capacity of human beings to know, producing knowledge and judging or assessing it. Consciousness constructs consciousness in an example of dialectics in human nature. Using Baudrillard's metaphor (1983), it can be said that the concept has a fatal condition, in the sense of being, so far, impossible to have a clear-cut definition while being so necessary that it cannot be left out.

Consciousness, Overview

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Introduction

The concept of consciousness is a fundamental aspect of critique. It is related to concepts such as awareness, reflection, reasoning, and knowing and also to that of mind. All of these concepts refer to the capacity to produce knowledge and to be aware of oneself and of the world and people surrounding that self, as well as of relationships within which one understands that one is and at the same time that one knows that others are. Consciousness, therefore, is necessary and inevitably part of the process of being and of its complex and changing condition. Concepts such

Keywords

Alienation; awareness; consciousness; conscientization; ideology; mind; praxis

History

Consciousness has had an interesting philosophical history. In the seventeenth century, the philosopher John Locke wrote about the perception of what passes in a mind's own mind (1972/1690), referring to the capacity to reflect about states of mind; producing, acquiring, and reflecting ideas; and being aware of judging them and one's behavior. Philosophical discussions about consciousness marked the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when authors

such as Leibniz, Kant, Hume, Berkeley, and Hegel, discussing the origin of ideas and knowledge, approached the concept. In the nineteenth century, in Europe, consciousness acquired a political sense with the works of Marx and Engels. For those authors, consciousness, so far considered as an individual phenomenon, was turned into a force for collective action and transformation. In Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology* (written between 1845 and 1846, published in 1933) and, in an oblique way, in Marx's second thesis about Feuerbach (first published in 1888 as an appendix in Engels' work about Ludwig Feuerbach), the concept of consciousness was linked to the concept of *praxis* (an Aristotelian concept meaning purposeful action designed to produce an object neither foreign nor external to the subject or agent doing it or to that agent's activity). Praxis' definition was changed by Marx and Engels, who considered it as an action with social transformation capacity and needing therefore the intervention of consciousness. They produced the conception of *real* consciousness, with truthful clear comprehension of life situations. That gave way to the idea of an opposite consciousness, linked to the concepts of ideology and alienation, which would be responsible for twisting or hiding the capacity to understand life circumstances, according to the specific interests of those sectors of society (classes, in Marxist theory), who own or control the means of production. After Marx's death, that sort of consciousness was qualified as *false*, in a letter from Engels to Mehring (1883, July 14th).

The Multiplication (and Disappearance) of the False Consciousness

The Marxist idea of a dichotomy in consciousness, and a variety of interpretations of it developed in philosophy and social sciences, had a prominent place in social philosophy and in many social sciences during the twentieth century. False consciousness, because of its definition as responsible for hiding real conditions and for developing opacity in the interest of specific groups in control of power, encouraged numerous ways to define falseness. The idea of

a false consciousness, ignoring the possibility of new knowledge and different life conditions, needing to be transformed in order for people to develop new possibilities of understanding economic and power relationships in society, has been used to explain why poverty around the world and inequality in society are accepted or considered as inevitable phenomena that are part of the way things are, so disconnecting these phenomena from the ruling classes' interests.

The idea of false consciousness soon began to change and to be challenged. The idea of false consciousness soon began to be challenged. The theory of consciousness, whose origins are in German (Husserl, Simmel, Weber), and English (MacIntyre, Ryule), philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries rejected this idea. In the mid-twentieth century, in France, J. P. Sartre (1943, p. 28) said "all consciousness is the consciousness of something"; this means it cannot be *false*, because consciousness is always related to things and phenomena. But it can be considered wrong or right according to who assesses it. Freire (1973/1964) discarded the practice of delineating different modes of consciousness whose contents produce different forms of knowledge. His answer to the effects of what was called "false consciousness" would be the idea and practice of conscientization [see "► [Conscientization](#)"]. French sociologist Boudon (1986, p. 299) criticized the "conceptually inadmissible utilization" of the term. Some examples of how false consciousness has been discarded by new political modes of being conscious of what is happening in society, as well as consciousness of possibilities to change it, are presented in the [Table 1](#).

Any consciousness is real because it is produced by people and expressed through language and actions; understanding reality is part of the fact that consciousness exists because people develop it. This way to approach the concept has turned interest away from the Marxist dichotomy and toward the changes that can happen in the content of consciousness. Consciousness, then, can be critical or not, related to social classes or ignoring them, and very complex. Goldmann (1959) noted the difficulty that all social facts

Consciousness, Overview, Table 1 Denominations attributed to views of consciousness

Dichotomic view of consciousness		View of consciousness as unity	
Authors	Definitions	Authors	Definitions
Friedrich, Engels. <i>Letter to F. Mehring</i> , July 14th, 1883	“Ideology is a process which the pretended thinker does accomplish with consciousness, but with false consciousness”	Freire (1973) <i>Education as practice of liberty</i> . New York: McGraw-Hill.	<i>Naïve consciousness</i> : This consciousness feels superior to facts, commanding them from outside and feeling free to understand them as one wants <i>Magical consciousness</i> : That constructed with a minimum of real causality, capturing facts and giving them a higher power that is feared and to which one is submitted <i>Critical consciousness</i> : Representation of things and facts as they appear in the empirical existence and in their causal and circumstantial correlations
Lucien Goldmann, (1959) <i>Conscience Réelle et Conscience Possible; Conscience Adequate et Fausse Conscience</i> (pp. 2–9). Proceedings of the 4th World Congress of Sociology. Milan-Stressa, Italy.	<i>Real consciousness</i> : The idea that a group has of a reality that it is confronting. Its structure and content come from factors in everyday life <i>Possible consciousness</i> : Consciousness transformed by way of understanding. Possibility of changing reality <i>Adequate consciousness</i> : Just sketched by Goldmann, would be a mode of the possible one <i>False consciousness</i> : Errors induced by social situation	J. Barreiro (1974/1986) <i>Educación Popular y Proceso de Concientización</i> . [Popular Education and Conscientization Process]. México, DF: Siglo XXI	<i>Historical consciousness</i> : Interpretation of a way to understand meanings and relationships among the people, making dialectical social transformations <i>Oppressed consciousness</i> : Representational defensive sketch impeding those oppressed, to see oppression as what it is, because they cannot elaborate the anguish resulting from discovery of the nature of their existence <i>Naïve consciousness</i> : Reflective and possible, in the sense that it has most of what is in a clear consciousness, without the threat posed by discoveries that could be unbalancing for the oppressed people <i>Class consciousness</i> : Capacity to represent oneself as a class of the oppressed, doing it from one’s own awareness of the oppression <i>Popular consciousness</i> : It is alienated because the person cannot recognize herself/himself in his human dimension <i>Critical consciousness</i> : Critical interpretation of the oppression in social structure and development of possibilities of transformation

(continued)

Consciousness, Overview, Table 1 (continued)

Dichotomic view of consciousness		View of consciousness as unity	
Authors	Definitions	Authors	Definitions
J. Gabel (1978) <i>Ideologies II</i> . Paris: Anthropos	<i>False or mystified consciousness</i> : Inadequacy exceeding the notion of error and extending alienation It can be ideological or utopian since both are different crystallization of falsity in consciousness	P. Ricoeur (1986) <i>Lectures on Ideology and Utopia</i> . New York: Columbia Univ. Press	<i>Inverted consciousness</i> : The inversion of human consciousness in such a way that what is abstract dominates what is real and concrete <i>Critical consciousness</i> : The subversion of what has been inverted

included in consciousness needed to be studied in an operative way. Their degree of adequacy cannot be established except by their insertion within relatively wider social totalities, so making transparent their significance and necessity. Consciousness covers everything a mind can be aware of and can respond in several ways according to the object or phenomena one is aware of, one has perceived or not, and one has understood or not.

Critical Debates

No one denies the existence of consciousness; every person is rightly considered to be the owner of one. But its status has been the object of much discussion between philosophers and scientists. The relationship between mind and body was first formalized within Descartes' explanation (1952/1647) of the duality between what he called the extensive substance, the body as mechanical nature (*res extensa*), and the thinking substance (*res cogitans*), thus establishing a dichotomy still present in current debates about the relationship between mind and body. Scientists sometimes object that consciousness cannot be defined in scientific terms. Despite advances in neuroscience, still one does not know how consciousness can be systematically related to body functions and mechanisms. Acceptance of consciousness as an object of scientific study requires a definition of a concept considered as "first-person subjective experience" (Boden, 1998, p. 1) and also depends

upon methodological considerations. Midgley (1998, p. 164) presented one extreme of the scientific position as a syllogism: "*Only what science studies is real/ Science cannot study consciousness/So: Consciousness is not real*". Searle (1998) responded by saying: "philosophy is in part an attempt to set us to the point where we can have systematic knowledge. That is why science is always right and philosophy is always wrong; as soon as we think we really know something, we stop calling it philosophy and start calling it science" (pp. 22–23).

Searle's answer, intended to overcome scientific obstacles to the question "How exactly do brain processes cause consciousness?" (1997, 1998), began by constructing a definition of consciousness in the scientific style and responding to nine critical points raised by the scientific position (unsystematic character, being nonobjective, causality problems, paradigms incommensurability, epiphenomenal objections, lack of evolutionary functions, dualism, reductionism, lack of information processes). That definition proposed consciousness as "those states of sentience or awareness that typically begin when we wake from a dreamless sleep and continue through the day until we fall asleep again, die, go into a coma, or otherwise become 'unconscious'" (1997, p. 17, 1998, p. 25).

Future Directions

This debate still is open. Science cannot yet explain how is it that neurons enable

consciousness (if it's a matter of only neurons), but in social science the effects of consciousness are nevertheless visible. Science demands an operative definition in accord with accepted conventions and methods. Something like that is happening: Damasio "somatic marker" hypothesis, presented in 1994, describes a neural mechanism able to embody social norms in such a way that they can be used in decision-making activities. His neurobiology of the mind seems to have opened the door to consciousness in some of the ways the natural sciences demand but also in some unexpected results: his research is systematic, "objective," causal, evolutionary, and not epiphenomenal, for it seems to go beyond the quantitative and qualitative mutual rejection of the 1980s and early 1990s.

Damasio (2010) also has found that consciousness can exist without language, reason, and memory. The whole brain is used and consciousness is not a single phenomenon; it has levels going from a *proto-self* that monitors the body state and a *core consciousness* whose function is to perceive the world and is so important that if it fails, everything will fail with it. There is also an *extended consciousness* in charge of memory, reason, and language and an *autobiographical consciousness* that permits its extension (Damasio, 1999).

In philosophy, and in social science (including psychology), other paths are opening new routes. An episteme of relatedness began to be constructed by philosophers in the early 1970s (E. Dussel, E. Levinas) and in the early 1990s and began to be used as a psychological construct in Latin America community and social psychology. The concept of "embodiment," created by Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1993), uniting body, language, history, and understanding, poses a different unifying perspective. Perhaps working with a different paradigmatic platform, the relationships between mind and body and the place of consciousness will begin to be understood in their complexity. Perhaps science should pay more attention to Gödel's theorem (1958). Alternatively, as Searle said in 1998 (p. 37): "above all, we need to forget about

the history of science, and get on with producing what may turn out be a new phase in that history."

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Consciousness-Raising Groups

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Introduction

The consciousness-raising (CR) group came about in the 1970s in the context of second-wave feminism and gay liberation. Its essential element was the use of group process for the transformation of individual awareness from a personal to a political frame of reference. Specifically, it aims to explore the origin of dissatisfaction and unhappiness that was previously experienced as resulting from a personal flaw to being the result of social oppression. It explicitly linked the broader understanding of societal structure to personal experience. This sort of transformation of awareness has a particular resonance to critical psychology, though its origins are outside of the discipline.

Definition

A consciousness-raising group is a small group process composed of peers for a particular minority group. The purpose of the group process is to examine the sociopolitical structures that create and sustain discrimination and disadvantage. By becoming more aware of the ways in which those structures determine personal experience, to facilitate changing the members' self-identity and well-being as well as mobilize them to change the sociopolitical structures.

Keywords

Consciousness; false consciousness; identity; oppression

Traditional Debates

The concept of consciousness-raising begins with the work of Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) on false consciousness. He held that false consciousness arises in an individual when they fail to understand the impact of social class on their lives due to the influence of ideology controlled by the ruling class. The result of false consciousness is that the proletariat fails to see the control mechanisms of the bourgeoisie. In its original form it was a central concept in Marxist thought. Michel Foucault (1926–1984) expanded on the basic theme of social control through manipulation of the intellectual framework through which people view their lived experience. In critical histories of mental health, penal institutions, and sexuality itself, he drew out the ways in which language, the bearer of ideology, preserves power imbalances between groups of people. In his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), he constructs a general theory of intellectual social control based in those examples.

Feminists pioneered the concept of consciousness-raising groups and popularized the phrase. Several groups were started in the mid- to late 1960s. Among the early writers on feminist consciousness-raising in the 1960s, Carol Hanisch is known for her article “The personal is political.” She ascribed the title of her work to Shulamith Firestone who compiled the edited volume that contained her essay (Firestone & Koedt, 1970). The title of her essay states the essence of consciousness-raising; people in oppressed minority groups often view the nature of their personal dissatisfaction as stemming from within rather than being the result of social disadvantage. The purpose of consciousness-raising groups is to reverse that and help the individual see the source of their personal dissatisfactions and difficulties as results of social forces.

That phrase highlights a significant aspect for social change. In order for social structures to change, a sufficient number of individuals affected by those structures must come to see

through the prevailing ideological rationale for the structures and create a movement for change. Chesebro, Cragan, and McCullough (1973) summarized the significance of the groups to the overall struggle for expanded human rights, “Rhetorically, political radicals and revolutionaries are characterized by their rhetoric of confrontation. Yet it is the small group process which precedes confrontations that produces the new perceptions, evaluative standards and commitment to concrete political actions controlling the confrontations” (p. 136).

The CR group was then picked up by the then forming gay liberation movement in the wake of the Stonewall Inn riots of June 1969. The issues of false consciousness is even more dramatically highlighted in gay liberation as homosexuality was still a diagnosable mental disorder at the time of the Stonewall Inn riots. Many lesbians and gay men were sent to treatment by parents or voluntarily went to “cure” a disease, a perversion of natural desire. So the challenge to existing ideology could not have been clearer as gay activists began consciousness-raising groups (Altman, 1971; A Gay male group, 1992). Even after the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), it has taken decades for public attitudes to change and begin to accept homosexuality as a normal variation of human sexuality. The CR group became a place where the frustrations and dissatisfactions could be reframed as stemming from social circumstances not intrapsychic pathology. Harry Hay (1912–2002) claimed that the Mattachine Society, an early homophile rights group, sponsored similar discussion groups, though not called consciousness-raising groups, in 1951 (Hay & Roscoe, 1997).

The 1970s saw the zenith of research consciousness-raising groups. Diane Kravetz who was a leading researcher in the area and commented on the CR group as an alternative to traditional psychotherapy for women (1976) reported a survey of some 1,669 participants (1978) and the factors affecting participation in

them (Kravetz, Maracek, & Finn, 1983). Brodsky (1973) noted that women in CR groups behaved differently than even in all-women therapy groups; there was a greater level of support for expanding roles at home and in society. This is precisely what the goal of a CR group is: allow individuals to take risks to add to their identity new ways of being and acting in the world.

What was the structure of the CR groups? There was considerable variation. One major influence was the “process group.” The traditional training group (T-group), the encounter group, and the therapy group are what is termed process, where there is no specific topic except the conversation between the members. The CR group often had an agreed upon focus, one’s experience as a member of a minority based on gender or sexual orientation. The three types of groups noted above are all led by facilitators trained in group process, but CR groups, like self-help groups, are peer led. Sometimes persons with backgrounds in mental health might facilitate such groups, but most were relatively leaderless and unstructured. An early member of the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) in New York recalled that sometimes this lack of structure resulted in unsatisfactory experiences, becoming fractious and too political (R. Wandel, personal communication, 2012). In another variation, topics were selected to guide the discussion in each session and participants were asked to give “witness” to their experience with the topic (A Gay man’s group, 1992; Larson, 1977).

Critical Debates

Over the course of the past decades, the concept of consciousness-raising has been applied much more broadly to a variety of movements including disability rights, ethnic and racial civil rights, and a host of multicultural and diversity issues. By the mid-1980s it had even become so diluted of political implication that it entered into the title of a text on multicultural sensitivity for counselors (Parker, 1988). The narrative aspect

of CR groups, the sharing of stories of experience as a member of a minority group, has easily lent itself to application to a wide range of processes involving identity development (Alvarez, Blume, Cervantes, & Thomas, 2009; Syed & Azmitia, 2008). While those authors refer to consciousness-raising, the articles show a clear shift away from the political focus that characterized the early CR groups in feminism and gay liberation. However, the fusion of personal and political is not entirely dead yet. Gautney (2011) sees the process involved in the groups known as Occupy Wall Street as deriving from the history of consciousness-raising; she specifically views the leaderless group process as an influence from earlier activist movements.

So the critical debate still concerns the tension between the personal and the sociopolitical. In an era when social problems are viewed as caused by personal choices, then solutions are likewise characterized as based in taking greater personal responsibility for one's choices. But this hides the effect of ideology, the prevailing assumptions and frames of reference, on the discourse concerning public policy issues. In a world where information and viewpoints are controlled by large conglomerates, alternative views are marginalized. New social media may offer a decentralized possibility for popularizing minority viewpoints, but their recent development leaves this question unresolved.

In conclusion, consciousness-raising groups began as a unique blend of personal stories told within a supportive group context where the aim was to explore the personal in order to find a link to the political that would then motivate the participants to become active agents of social change. Second-wave feminism and gay liberation were the chief struggles that used this technique to both change how individuals perceived their own lives and circumstances and motivate collective action. These groups are of particular interest to critical psychology as they represent a paradigm for understanding personal issues in a broader sociopolitical context. The "narrative turn" in psychology is very congenial to these processes, and the emphasis on authenticity and genuineness that characterized

the human potential movement within humanistic-existential psychology also adopts a narrative and experiential group process, though it usually ignores the political implications. The current usages of the concept of "consciousness-raising" also have moved out of the political area to more personal psychological focus. But the need for consciousness-raising still exists. For example, in large parts of the USA, bullying and intolerance of LGBTQ youth make the need for CR groups all the more urgent, yet sadly, psychology seems to have forgotten this important legacy from the activism of previous decades. Perhaps it is time for a revival.

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language, negotiation of meanings, and shared narratives – the interpersonal and social context (Kelly, 1969). Therefore, psychologies that recognize themselves in this perspective are interested in the ways people construe their worlds, in the way they experience and know, and in their personal points of view instead of their traits, internal structures, or social determinant elements. The focus definitively moves from “observing for knowing” to “knowing the knowledge” (Maturana & Varela, 1987).

Constructivism, Overview

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Introduction

Constructivism is an epistemological approach based on the assumption that knowledge, everything that is known, does not prescind from an observer but is actively construed: what we consider reality corresponds with our experience and, consequently, with our knowledge of it. This way of thinking is absolutely revolutionary with respect to a millenary philosophical tradition (Warren, 1998), which prompts us to assume that, if an action, a notion, or a strategy leads to a previewed or wished effect, this success necessarily shows some aspects, some elements of an independent reality. In order to know the world we need only collect a sufficient number of elements and “facts.”

From the constructivist perspective, this causal link is purely illusional. “Facts,” instead of preceding knowledge, emerge as significant from our experience and are the product of our constructive activity (Glaserfeld, 1989). Success in action, theory, and notions, seen from this position, tells us only that these are, in the frame of our experience, possible ways. Knowledge is seen as action, as a way of taking part in the world and contemporaneously creating it. The person is considered an active interpreter, engaged in giving sense to their world and in creating – through

Definition

Assuming that a living organism is different from any mechanical apparatus for its capacity to discriminate and choose, at least within certain limits, what is conceivable and significant for it – as cybernetics suggests – we quickly realize that what we call “knowledge” is something that a creature cannot find precast, but a construction specified by the internal knowing structure of the same organism (Foerster, 2003). In other words, reality is not independent of who observes it, interprets it, and experiences it.

This assumption leads to many interesting implications. One of the main ones is that the idea that there is a unique reality (a universe) is abandoned in favor of the idea of a multiplicity of realities (a multiverse), as many as common or individual constructions ordering the experience. This, in turn, implies that we live in a multiple world, continuously changing, which we cannot take for granted once and for all.

Moreover, from this perspective, languages and words neither have nor transmit meanings in themselves but only “instructions” for choices, and these choices are related with the repertoire (system) of meanings (constructs) that emerged during our social experience. So, believing to have understood another person means, at best, that our interpretation does not suggest discrepancies: what he/she answers, or does, seems, at the moment, compatible with what we intend. This channelizes what we can do, our actions, our possible future experiences and social experiments, as well as our idea of ourselves, of others, of our lives.

The criterion of validity, equivalent to the range of correspondence between reality and its representation has been substituted by the notion of viability (von Glasersfeld, 1980), which is a feasible construction. Through this principle of viability, as feasible construction – very different from any subjectivity and intuition – “reality” emerges from our experiences and takes form from our vision of the world interconnected and shared with people around us. It is exactly the awareness that each of us gives a personal meaning to each experience that allows us to consider the encounter with the other as an event, an experience capable of valuing and intertwining our narrations with others.

With regard to the psychological theories and, more precisely, to clinical approaches, constructivism has contributed to evolve both the idea of “disease” and the notion of “change” (Kelly, 2003). Inasmuch as any personal constructions channelize our actions as viable, what we consider a disease, although it implies psychological pain, cannot simply be considered dysfunctional. On the contrary, it reveals the best and more viable and meaningful choice for that person, in the light of her/his personal theory. Therefore, any change will be seen not merely in terms of behavior or circumstances but concerning personal knowledge, meanings, and construction of reality; “self” and “others” comprised. Any clinical practice, any scientific research, in a revolutionary way, from this position, has necessarily to be rooted in the point of view of persons on themselves.

Keywords

Constructivism; reality; idealism; cybernetic; epistemology; meaning; interpretation; knowledge; experience; action

History

As a cognitive attitude, the roots of constructivism are very old (Glasersfeld, 1990).

In philosophy this attitude was expressed, for example, by Pyrrho’s school (fourth century BC). Skeptics declared that true knowledge is impossible, but they have never changed the notion of knowledge itself. More recently (sixteenth century), Giambattista Vico reversed the traditional approach to knowledge, represented by the thought of René Descartes: instead of asking in which way the mind can reach a “true” knowledge, he wondered about the way in which the mind organizes the experiences and obtains “facts,” so much so that his work “*De antiquissima Italorum sapientia*” can be considered the first manifesto of constructivism (Vico, 1710/2005).

From there, until the first part of the twentieth century, other thinkers have contributed to the constructivist approach. During the eighteenth century, the British Empiricists George Berkeley, John Locke, and David Hume considered experience as the unique matrix of any knowledge and supposed that the “qualities” of objects are dependent from the observer instead of from the objects in themselves. Later, Immanuel Kant sustained that concepts work as ruling principles for experience, not as mirrors of reality but as guides to interact with the world.

During the twentieth century, starting from different points and working independently in different areas, various thinkers have contributed to the same river of this revolutionary approach. Between the 1940s and 1950s, almost contemporarily, in Italy, Switzerland, the United States and Russia, respectively Silvio Ceccato, Jean Piaget, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Norbert Wiener, Heinz von Foerster, and Lëv Vygotskij, producing studies and research, were interested in the way we construe the reality in which we live in. Of course, they underlined and emphasized different aspects of it, but they essentially had in common the idea that reality is not independent from an observer and knowledge is created through an activity. In particular, the word *constructivism*, related to psychology, was introduced for the first time by Jean Piaget (1936), who has also the merit to have spoken for the first time of a mind as “construer of meanings.”

George A. Kelly (1955) was the first psychologist to develop a complete and articulate theory, totally constructivist, in the field of psychotherapy. More recently, at the end of 1970s, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela enriched this perspective (1980), studying living systems as a form of knowledge self-organizing. Today, we have two general tendencies in constructivism. The first is rational constructivism, which does not deny the existence of a physical, real world, independent from the observer but that cannot be directly known (Gopnik, 2009). The second, radical constructivism, is well represented by the thinking of Ernst von Glasersfeld (1995), which sustains the idea that knowledge does not refer to any objective reality but only to the organization of our actions in the field of our experience.

Traditional Debates

Originating as a reaction to realism, which assumes the existence of a material reality outside us and independent of our experience of it, since appearing on the scene of psychology (and not only), constructivism has had to face the accusation of solipsism, which is, in contrast, based on the idea that the only evidence is the single I (*solum ipse*) and its world. This form of subjective idealism, therefore, admits merely the proof of the consciousness's contents and mental phenomena. So, an external reality is pure invention. In other words, on the one hand, realism sustains an "objective truth" that is outside any human influence and seems to deny our individuality; on the other, according to solipsism, any shared knowledge is impossible. That is a position that could be seen as a sort of epistemological nihilism, a sterile and paralyzing relativism. Then, realism and idealism give a completely antithetical answer to the question: does reality exist?

In the view of many authors, the position of constructivism between these two points could be summarized in terms of soft relativism (Raskin, 2001). This statement, nevertheless, does not

seem to really overcome the traditional philosophical dichotomy between realism and subjective idealism. The attempt to radically transcend this traditional opposition, configuring constructivism as a truly third way, is done considering the environment as an ensemble of ties in which a knowledge system can construe many, more or less, viable ways, visions, and interpretations (Glasersfeld, 1980). In any case, it is the system that specifies what is really relevant in its experience. Thus, knowledge is not a reflected image of an external reality. It is, rather, the organization of the world constituted by our experience. Saying that reality is not independent from an observer, finally, does not mean denying reality, as solipsism does, but means denying the possibility of knowing it in terms of merely correspondence.

Critical Debates

Another dichotomy present in psychology is the opposition between individual and social dimensions of knowledge. From one point of view, the self is determined by its internal structure – anything it would mean – from another, the self is socially determined and constituted. In effect, emphasizing the focus on the observer, apparently, constructivism poses itself on the side of an individualistic approach. Affirming that no observation can be done without an observer, however, does not mean that we are the result of our internal and singular structure, that our vision of the world is individualistically determined. The personal point of view is, in fact, inclusive of a social framework, but is not separate from it. This distinction between what is "individual" and what is "social" is a construction, a discrimination made by an observer. Nevertheless, because a "social context" is not more *real* than an ontological external, "objective" reality, it is – exactly like this last – an order, a possible organization of our experience as *self* among other *selves*. So, what is "social" and what is "personal" becomes not two simple opposite extremes in a causal relationship,

but two poles in a complementary, circular and necessary relationship. As Maturana and Varela wrote: “We have only the world that we can bring forth with others” (1987, p. 248).

Of course, this vision has many and significant implications in terms of politics, social power, ethics and relationships in general (Giliberto, 2010). First of all, the awareness that the way in which we live among others is the way in which, shaping them, we are shaped by them, conducts us to consider each action, each construction that channelizes us into the world, as political (Scheer, 2008). Constructivism, asking in which way we construe our social context instead of considering this as predefined, provides us with a powerful theoretical instrument with the aim of exploring and understanding political issues such as conflicts, group identities, international relationships, and ecological questions.

International Relevance

Since the explosion of constructivist thinking in the fifteenth century, and up until now, although in separate and independent fields of research, a growing number of people, researchers, practitioners, and scholars developed the approach and its applications in several areas: psychology, psychotherapy, counseling, coaching, anthropology, politics, linguistics, education, biology, and so on. From there onwards, moreover, books and articles on these topics are innumerable. For the particular dispersion and multiplicity of schools and theories that translate this approach in practice, it is also difficult to collect all the journals devoted to constructivism or journals that collect articles on it. Among these, in any case, those that can be considered relevant include *Constructivist Foundations* (e-journal), *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *Personal Construct Theory and Practice* (e-journal), and *The Constructivist* (e-journal).

Furthermore, the intense congressional activity also testifies to the international relevance of the approach, both as regional and in

international conferences. For example, the international community interested in personal constructivist psychology has organized since 1976 a biennial international conference, each time and in turn in a different continental area: America, Europe, and Australasia. For instance, during the conference in Venice (2009) there were participants and presenters from 21 different countries. At the same time, different groups interested in different topics, as well as different regional communities and associations, organize and manage several other conferences and activities.

Practice Relevance and Future Directions

Practical developments and applications of the constructivist approach, because it is focused on the idea of person as global interpreter and not as sum of functions, are multiple and have been realized – and are still being realized – in many areas. In psychotherapy and counseling, constructivism covers a wide range of disorders, because the diagnosis regards the way in which a person faces their problems maintaining, at the same time, a viable and acceptable sense of identity, and not a simple constellation of symptoms. Simplifying, the therapeutic relationship becomes a sort of laboratory in which the client can explore and test different ways to construe and give sense to others, the world and him/herself.

In education, perhaps, in these last years, constructivism has experienced the most considerable expansion. The idea that each student is an active interpreter and not simply a passive receiver of knowledge implies many practical consequences in terms of didactical techniques and methods, in order to do something *with* students and not put information *in* them. Furthermore, this identical attitude is the source of the constructivist approach both to consultancy and training in organizations. More recently, based on the same principle of psychotherapy, but in a completely de-pathologized and nonclinical field, constructivist coaching is emerging (Stojnov & Pavlovic, 2010).



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Online Resources

- Classroom Compass. <http://www.sedl.org/scimath/compass/v01n03/>
- Constructivist Foundations. <http://www.univie.ac.at/constructivism/journal/>
- Enactivism. <http://www.acadiau.ca/~dreid/enactivism/index.html>
- Ernst von Glasersfeld. <http://www.univie.ac.at/constructivism/EvG/>
- Journal of Constructivist Psychology. <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/upcy20/current>
- Okios. <http://www.oikos.org/homeen.htm>
- pcp-net. <http://www.pcp-net.de/>
- Personal construct theory and practice. <http://www.pcp-net.org/journal/>
- Radical constructivism. <http://www.univie.ac.at/constructivism/>
- The Jean Piaget Archives. <http://archivespiaget.ch/en/index.html>
- The Taos Institute. <http://www.taosinstitute.net/>

Consumerism, Overview

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Introduction

To consume is an essential requirement of life, in particular, to that which regards the fulfillment of basic necessities human beings have; food, energy, and dwelling are some of the satisfiers for consumption needs. Therefore, all societies have been consumer societies in this primary and general sense, which is to say that the act of consuming is always a cultural process. However, the consumer culture, according to Slater (1997), is the specific dominant way of cultural reproduction which takes place within Western modernity. Hence, historically, just few societies have been, from a date onwards and in an increasing number of places, “consumerist” societies.

To remark the very specificity of the consumer culture and, in that way, get to locate consumerism, it is crucial to recognize a basic difference between economy and market, because these are two different concepts. In fact, not all economies

have been market economies. For instance, the patterns of consumption developed all along the ten centuries of the Middle Ages are not those of a consumer society, because people did not have a market economy, but a subsistence one. We can then understand the economy, in a broad sense, as the way of organizing and administrating resources to produce the necessary means for social reproduction. In contrast, by market we should understand a mechanism, which has come to name a particular organization or system of economy: the market economy. It is in this economic realm that consumerism makes sense.

According to Karl Polanyi (1944), the market's economy was consolidated during the nineteenth century. Once established, the market economy gradually spread a self-regulated market device. Polanyi pointed out a key condition of its performance: land, labor, and money became merchandises, which brought them into market circulation. Consequently, the production of consumer goods and the provision of services were, for the first time, incorporated into the market. We can say that all commodities as well as the services offered are, from its very beginning, just merchandise. The value of goods, products, objects, services, etc. neither depends on its quality or attributes nor on its usefulness, but on the value of exchange, namely, the price fixed to it in the market. Finally, the purportedly self-regulated market's character is nothing but the claimed balance between the supply, the demand, and the prices that rule the interaction among sellers and buyers.

The consumer culture defines a system in which consumption basically consists in the purchase of commodities and the market's logic constitutes the only formulae for acquiring any wealth. In a society ruled this way, it is conceivable that most efforts are directed, in a basic and general sense, toward sales; thus, such societies have produced a diversified series of consumption indicators. Each one of these commodities is self-proposed as a satisfier. As a corollary of this, we can recall the words of Charles Kettering, head of research for General Motors for 27 years from 1920 to 1947: "The key to economic prosperity is the organized creation of dissatisfaction" (quoted by Rifkin, 1995).

"The key to economic prosperity is the organized creation of dissatisfaction" seems like an LP echo of this other 1899 quote by the Professor Robert Ellis Thompson: "It is a benefit to spread a discontent with ugliness in dress, the house and furniture. The peddler and the storekeeper are missionaries of civilization and through their labor we have reached the point at which the poorest are no longer content with what once satisfied the most opulent. But much remains to be done" (quoted in Matt, 2003, p. 182).

Definition

As Zwangler (1994) points out, it is not strange that the evolution of the term consumerism, in some places like the USA, has acquired, from the mid-1960s and on, a sense associated with the precepts of the consumer's movement, precepts that include a set of actions, dispositions, and laws directed to the consumers' protection. This brings up the issue that either a society gathers conditions to make possible the formation of a protective movement of consumers' interests or it will come to an individual or social situation of excess in consumption practices; in any case, nowadays, consumption has reached a tremendous preponderance in society, indeed in patterns of sociality themselves. It sounds actually logical that in a society in which consumption is a core practice, we may see the constitution of a consumers' interest movement.

Now, we should mention that, currently, the most popular and prevailing meaning of consumerism for most of the people is that of excessive consumption. As a matter of fact, if we analyze the suffix "ism," we will find some different, though, similar denotative ways in which the word consumerism is understood as it can mean the action, process, and/or practice of an excessive consumption that characterizes an individual, a group, or a society; a characteristic behavior or quality; or else, a doctrine or system of economic principles. Therefore, consumerism is a phenomenon that takes place in social settings where the market economy, i.e., capitalism, has been developed.

Keywords

Consumption; consumer culture; market; economy; market economy; commodities

Traditional Debates

Georg Simmel, a theorist who lived in the late nineteenth-century Germany, was the first critical analyst of the consumer society. His essays on fashion, life in modern cities, and, especially, his magnum opus *Philosophy of Money* are some examples of his work done in this field. The interesting and original book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* by Thorstein Veblen should be also mentioned, written in the USA almost at the same time as Simmel's works. Veblen suggests a notion of conspicuous consumption, which means consuming as means of attaining or maintaining social status, a practice related to whom he termed as the leisure class. In addition, in a subtle manner, the Spanish thinker José Ortega y Gasset in his book *"The Revolt of the Masses"* published in 1930, carried out some critical considerations about mass consumption and its role in the *mass man* configuration, all this occurring because the social relations are being increasingly organized and mediatized by buying and selling transactions. After World War II, some authors of the Frankfurt School deployed their criticism of mass consumption, especially Theodor Adorno's critique of the cultural industry in times of mass culture and Herbert Marcuse's notion of *repressive desublimation*, which means a condition apparently favorable to the release of the sexual impulses, making unfeasible sublimation. Such a condition is due purportedly to a lifting of repression and consequently a growing freedom in the advanced industrial capitalist societies, where precisely the overproduction of commodities facilitates confusing the acquisition of goods (affordable) with the instantaneous rather than mediated drive's satisfaction. Subsequently, in the 1970s, Jean Baudrillard published his influential critical works on consumption and consumer society under the "new conditions" in advanced capitalist societies. The Baudrillardian significant

contribution highlighted the symbolic as a core dimension in the contemporary social dynamics, not just around the political economy of sign but through a pervading production/designing of which he terms simulacra.

Even from the beginnings of twentieth century, we can find elsewhere the participation of psychology within the marketing and business studies with a mainly instrumentalist orientation (On the Psychology of Advertising (1900) by Harlow Gale; some years later the psychology of advertising by Walter D. Scott as well as the works of John B. Watson for the Walter Thompson Ltd.) In contrast to this, it has been barely two decades ago that in psychology, critical studies of consumption have begun to be consolidated as a particular field of study: Dittmar (1992), Lunt and Livingstone (1992), Lunt (1995), and Catalano and Sonenberg (1993). We could say that, in general, studies on "consumption" have grown exponentially. From sociology and anthropology domains, we should mention, among others, Warde (1991, 1997), Featherstone (1991), Bock (1993), Ritzer (1993), Yiannis and Lang (1995), Lury (1996), Schor (1998, 2004), Slater (1997), Miles (1998), and Miller (1995).

Another consistent effort coming from the psychological discipline to analyze this matter in a radically different way to that of the instrumentalist studies of pro-market and business is that in the work of H. Dittmar and colleagues (Dittmar, 1992, 1994, 2008). This author's main concern has been "to understand the psychological impact of consumer culture ideals specifically on the identity and well-being of individual adults, adolescents and children" (Dittmar, 2008, p. 6), and his ideas stand on the other critical-reflexive site of the spectrum.

Critical Debates

Turning now to the current debates on the topic of consumerism or consumer culture, let us note two perspectives that in both cases imply some kind of bias or "amputation of the observed." On the one hand, there are some analytical focuses which, must be faced, by ignoring or minimizing

the economic determination when analyzing the act of consuming and consumerism implies the denial of the very historical materiality of reality, with all that this entails! On the other hand, there is the thorny issue about where do the moral considerations should be located. In other words, what should be the scope of our moral judgment? How far should we allow this to influence the analysis of consumerism? In effect, these questions hint at another source of argumentation that will depend on the position assumed in regard to whether or not the science discourse should be free of moral considerations and judgments.

Certainly, both of these contesting points of view obey one and the same reason. With this, I refer to their analytical paradox regarding if they should be addressing consumption or consumerism as a subject situated historically and structurally, and, if so, evaluate and weigh its implications and its political and social consequences for different groups, considering as well the particular economic and political structure of the analyzed societies. Furthermore, this sequence of reflections would also lead, in the contemporary world, to taking into account the current situation of the planet and the consequences that the consumption system has over global commons such as land, air, seas, and, in general, all natural resources.

Consequently, in this debate, we have on the one side the psychocultural approaches, in which we can see, as Lodziak says, the "...speculative psychocentric (meaning, pleasure, self-identity) accounts of the interactions between consumer culture and the individual..." (Lodziak, 2002, p. 5). Among the representatives of this type of focus, we can mention the following: from the field of psychology, Dittmar (1992, 1994, 2008) and Lunt and Livingstone (1992); from the field of the ethnography of shopping and material possessions, Miller (1998, 2008); and finally, from the sociological field, Slater (1997), Mackay (1997), and Paterson (2006). Their standpoint is that of understanding "consumers as seekers of identity"; this is perhaps one of the major axioms of such

perspective. This becomes clear in Dittmar's statement that "consumer goods have come to play a stronger psychological role for us: we value and buy them as means of regulating emotions and gaining social status and as ways of acquiring or expressing identity and aspiring to an "ideal self"" (Dittmar, 2008, p. 2). From this liberal approach, it appears, as Schor (1998) mentions, as if consumption choices were both personal and trivial which is to say socially inconsequential.

From the psychocultural standpoint, one of the stronger criticisms that has been made of the production of consumption approach relates to the consideration about how consumers in mass culture societies have been regarded as passive and manipulable beings. This has been seen since Adorno's studies of the cultural industry as well as from within the propaganda/advertising's displaying, in short, through ideological means of manipulation (e.g., Featherstone, 1991). Nevertheless as Lodziak writes, "The major theorists of the production of consumption perspective – Gorz and the Frankfurt school – make it absolutely clear that consumption is not produced by advertising and the media. Rather, they insist that consumption is produced, in the first instance, by the alienation of labor and the subsequent organization and experience of employment" (Lodziak, 2002, p. 92).

From the perspective of the production of consumption, on the other hand, the psychocultural approaches to these problematics seem just as some kind of "games people play," and, therefore, what is at stake for them is to avoid playing it in a wrong way, or else, playing the game with virtuosity.

Thus, the perspective of production of consumption confronts the psychocultural approach on issues related to their avoidance of important factors such as the conditions and rules underlying the consumption game and the arrangement of situations that force people to play it. Given the structural conditions of contemporary society, people have to play from very different positions that are linked to the income distribution among countries, families, and individuals; however, all

these issues remain unaddressed. Within the production of consumption approach, Adorno and Marcuse (scholars from the Frankfurt School) were the key pioneers. As current researchers that have taken this perspective, we should mention authors such as Juliet Schor, Conrad Lodziak, and, from the Krisis group, Robert Kurz, Anselm Jappe, Claus Peter Ortlieb, and Roswitha Scholz. We cannot fail to also mention Santiago Alba. Finally, Z. Baumann occupies some place between these two perspectives. Moreover, the past two decades have seen the rise and growth of different anti-consumerist initiatives; to name a few, we could recall the Adbusters (www.adbusters.org), the French Casseurs de pub (www.casseursdepub.org) and Resistance á l'agressi  n publicitaire (www.antipub.org), and the Spanish group Consume hasta morir (www.lettra.org/spip/). Finally, in the USA there is the work of Reverend Billy (www.revilly.com).

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Context, Overview

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Introduction

The study of psychological processes is increasingly characterized by a focus on understanding the dynamic relationships that exist between people and different life contexts. Although the study of environmental contexts has long been a goal for psychology, the ways in which contextual factors are interconnected and the mutual shaping of human action and life's context still need to be better conceptualized.

Definition

Context is the background of a figure and cannot exist separately. The key element allowing the creation of the relationship amidst inside and outside social settings is the idea of the link between context with the figure itself (Kindermann & Valsiner, 1995). When a phenomenon comes into being, context is necessarily there. This idea is in contrast with the “traditional” psychological concept of context, understood as something into which a person is placed.

According to Valsiner's notion of context (1987), the organism creates the context and the context creates the organism in return, even if they are not melded into one entity. This differs also from the perspective from which the two aspects are considered similar and connected (Rogoff, 2003) rather than unified but separated. The idea of inclusive separation (Valsiner, 1987) is a more heuristic way to look at the relationships than the idea of exclusive separation, in which person and context are just separated, or fusion, in which they cannot be distinguished at all.

A phenomenon cannot be theoretically analyzed “in relation” without having parts to

relate. In order to understand the dynamic nature of the relationship between person and context, it is worthwhile to theoretically keep person and environment together, like separate entities always related as a whole.

Keywords

Inclusive separation; mutuality; life's context; human development; *völkerpsychologie*; culture; ecological approach

Critical Debates

The approach that emphasizes the person-context relationship as part of a specific historic-cultural realm is found in a number of different domains of psychological research, however, it takes on special importance when applied to the study of human development and educational processes.

The history of psychology has long seen a prevalence of explanations of development, and psychological function in general, that pay little attention to the fundamental role of contexts. Nevertheless, alongside the so-called “individualistic” approaches, since the dawn of modern psychology, a minor yet solid awareness of the relationship between sociocultural contexts and developmental trajectories has taken root.

Wundt, in the arc of his vast scientific production, detected the need for two different levels of analysis in psychology: one focusing on the study of the mind according to the canons of experimentation with an individualistic approach, and another, called *Völkerpsychologie* by the author – folk psychology (1900–1920) – which, in his opinion, was indispensable for understanding the role of culture in the development of higher mental processes, and therefore situated on the level of the analysis of collective phenomena. Cole (1996) historically reconstructs the issue of the “two psychologies” proposed by Wundt, stressing in particular how the dominant currents of twentieth century psychological research significantly diminished the role of cultural and contextual factors in determining

the development of individual psychological processes. Nonetheless, through a succession of events, in different places and following different paths, the link between individual, context, and culture cropped up many times in psychological research, although it failed to achieve a position of broad agreement. Although “social” perspectives of development and cognitive activity have been around since the origins of psychology, the construct of “context” was never unanimously defined, despite its repeated use (Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1996), probably because of the difficulty in “modeling” the relationships between an individual and context.

In order to understand the extent of the presence of this “constant” in the history of psychology, we can turn to the crucial contribution made by Vygotsky (1934, 1978), among others, and by the Russian historic-cultural school. This thinker can be credited with having taken up the legacy of Wundt’s social psychology, which aimed to study higher psychological processes through the analysis of daily activities and the characteristics of the culture in which individuals act. Vygotsky’s theory of psychological development (1934) attributes a significant role in cognitive development to the historic and cultural context to which an individual belongs.

The historic and cultural approach, by rejecting an analysis of psychological development detached from social influences, adopts a unity of analysis according to which the individual and the historic, social, and cultural conditions in which that individual develops appear inseparable. The legacy of Wundt and Vygotsky today enjoys a healthy presence in the scientific framework of the social psychology of development and education. One of the richest paradigms of psychology that presents “the way in which the individual becomes individual-in-context, a culturally adapted individual,” is Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach (1979).

The author, taking Kurt Lewin’s field theory (1951) as a basis, offered an ecological theory of development. Bronfenbrenner’s crucial contribution was to identify and document the systemic interconnections that link individual development and the context in which a person lives.

The author postulates that the possibilities of growth, evolution, and wellness in human beings do not depend on a single cause, but instead are tied to frameworks that include the individuals with their biological and psychological specifics, the environment, groups, culture, and society as a whole. Consequently, the end result of the powers that favor (or hinder) development can only be understood from a systemic point of view, but one that nonetheless remains tied to a precise historic and cultural context. This gives rise to the isolation of individual factors, and their subsequent generalization can be misleading. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach describes in particular the progressive adaptation between the individual, his or her life settings, and the way in which the relationships between the individual and the environment are modulated by anchor points in multiple dimensions (physical, social, and cultural).

An analysis of modulations in the evolutionary course and its outcomes as a function of the joint action of individual and contextual elements was more completely theorized in what Bronfenbrenner (1988), again drawing on Lewin (1951), called the person-process-context model. This model points to the need to study, from a two-way standpoint, both the interactions a person has with his or her context and the influence the context has on the person. Thus, a person’s development would depend on that individual’s characteristics, on those of the context, and on the history of past interactions between these two elements. Bronfenbrenner thereby presents a concept of the environment as significant to development that is complementary to Lewin’s. This does not appear restricted to the psychological sphere directly experienced by the person but also includes the interconnections among various environmental situations and broader dimensions of a sociocultural nature. This is the notion of an ecological environment that is generally represented as a series of concentric structures organized into four levels. Two of these levels imply direct participation by the individual (microsystems and mesosystems), while the ecosystems indicate those contexts that “indirectly” influence the behavior and

development of the individual. The macrosystem is the contextual “frame” that contains all the other systems.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory has a number of implications, especially in the psychosocial field. It highlights how we cannot take for granted the universality and generalizability of the macrosystem in which we live. Depending on the social and cultural context to which we belong and the way in which we relate to it, our behavior will take on a different meaning, with important consequences on the course of development as well. Consequently, development should no longer be studied abstractly but rather as a function of the specific characteristics of life contexts.

It is important that disciplines that intend to investigate development avoid devolving into a study of individual, decontextualized variables, and that these disciplines be able to remain well connected to human beings and the events of their lives that develop across different sites. Suffice to consider how each person migrates daily between different places or institutions (i.e., home and school or workplace and home, etc.). The scientific question therefore becomes how to analyze contexts and their interconnectedness.

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The Virtual Laboratory. http://vlp.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/index_html

Coping, Overview

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Introduction

During the 1960s psychologists began shifting the focus from describing or determining the consequences of stress to examining responses to stressful experiences. It was at that time when mental health researchers and practitioners began systematically examining the ways that people emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally coped with stress and conflict. Current research on coping assumes that the environment and person interact dynamically. That is, the choice of coping style is based on the appraisal made in the moment and the extent of the options available at that time (Lazarus, 1993). Individuals draw upon a wide range of coping strategies when dealing with people or situations that invoke negative responses such as anger, fear, or anxiety (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986). Successful coping strategies are capable of mediating negative affect and cognitive appraisals of the event, ultimately affecting both short-term

functioning and long-term physical and mental health.

Definition

Coping has been defined as the process of attempting to reduce distress associated with threat, harm, or loss (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). Individuals engage in a variety of strategies to manage negative thoughts and emotions. Coping is not a one-dimensional construct; it encompasses relatively stable coping styles as well as coping responses employed in specific stressful encounters. Researchers have adopted two basic approaches to coping; one emphasizes style while the other emphasizes process.

Keywords

Stress; health; coping mechanism; post-traumatic stress disorder

Traditional Debates

Early coping research and theory focused on the use of specific defense mechanisms in response to distress. Defense mechanisms were seen as stable aspects of one's personality that dictated consistently adaptive or maladaptive responses to stressful events. From this preliminary research rooted in psychoanalytic theory came the stylistic approach to coping. The stylistic approach concentrates on a hierarchy of coping responses, some more effective than others, implying a standard measure of the effectiveness of coping responses. Stylistic approaches to coping were assessed in order to determine a person's general coping style; however, research revealed that the way an individual copes on average tends to be a poor predictor of how he or she will cope with a specific stressful encounter. Lazarus (1993) critiqued the stylistic approach for the lack of focus on the environmental factors that affect choice of coping style, arguing that the connection to the

Freudian theory of psychopathology and defense mechanisms were a "bit too neat for it to be generally applicable – it is more a conceptual ideal rather than a clinical reality" (Lazarus, p. 367). From there, a complementary body of research was developed to better understand the process by which individuals evaluate the best possible range of responses to specific stressful encounters.

The transactional theory, or process approach, proposed by Richard Lazarus concentrates on the interaction between two components – cognitive appraisal and coping (Folkman et al., 1986). According to this theory, appraisals occur when a person assesses a particular situation to determine whether or not it is applicable to his or her health. Following the appraisal process, people draw upon a wide range of cognitive and behavioral strategies to manage stress. While people generally use a variety of coping strategies, some strategies are more consistently used in certain settings than others. The particular characteristics of a stressful situation can influence coping effectiveness as well as coping choice.

Coping strategies, often divided into engagement and disengagement coping, can be either beneficial or harmful to a person's emotional well-being (Carver et al., 1989). Because specific coping styles are often associated with certain personality types, coping strategies have the potential to be useful in the short term but maladaptive in the long term (e.g., neurotic personality types utilizing disengagement strategies such as escape and avoidance). In order to counteract long-term negative effects, a person might use several coping strategies over time; for example, using avoidance until one is psychologically ready to engage in planning and taking action. Coping flexibility refers to a person's ability to adjust ineffective or negative coping styles to a more successful method after evaluation (Kato, 2012). Coping flexibility is imperative when a situation is not resolved by initial coping responses. Furthermore, a person's ability to alter coping efforts may lead to increased psychological or emotional benefits (Thoits, 1995).

Critical Debates

Current research on coping varies greatly; while much of the research works within the traditional frameworks, there are trends toward examining coping from a feminist and critical-community approach. While examining the effect of identity on coping strategies, Leaper and Arias (2011) found that college women who publically identified as a feminist valued the *confronting* coping style more than did those that privately identified as feminist. The feminist value of challenging the status quo might lead women who identify as feminists to adopt coping strategies that are in line with activism and collective action. Additional gender-related research has focused on the *sex-linked anxiety coping theory* (McCarthy & Goffin, 2005). According to this theory, women have more coping resources and utilize more adaptive coping because they have more experience coping with anxiety. Feiler and Powell (2012) found support for the sex-linked anxiety coping theory while examining the effect of gender on selection test (i.e., job interview) performance. Although women and men did not differ in their level of anxiety, men were more adversely affected by their anxiety. This study, and similar studies, might lead psychologists to conclude that women have an advantage because they have more coping resources; however, the discussion regarding status and power differentials that have led to women's need to have more fully developed tools to deal with stress and anxiety is missing. In fact, much of the previous research on coping employs an analysis of self-initiated attempts to cope with stressful situations, instead of focusing on societal responsibility to protect individuals from harm. For example, Katz and colleagues (2009) contend that early experiences with stress are beneficial to children because they provide *stress inoculation-induced resilience*. Future research on coping might emphasize the structural impediments to achieving or persisting, rather than placing the responsibility of coping with stress upon the individual – cognitive

reappraisals might be useful in the short term but do nothing to change the status quo.

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Creativity

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Introduction

Why is it that revolutionary ideas in science, art, philosophy, and technology emerge at one moment in history rather than another? Why within certain geographical locations do we witness a wealth of creative new ideas while other regions appear to produce little of lasting value? What role does the individual creator play in the production and transmission of creative work from technological innovations to novel forms of artistic expression?

Definition

At the most basic level, creativity refers to the production of something original, novel, innovative, and meaningful. While some acts of creativity are only meaningful and important to the individual creator, other acts of creativity have been responsible for radically altering the trajectory of human history and existence.

Keywords

Freud; Skinner; cognitive; humanistic; historical; determinism; convergent; divergent; artificial intelligence (AI); social justice

Traditional Debates

Early attempts to understand creativity typically fell within two camps. Freud's (1959) essay on the creative writer suggested that the creative act could ultimately be traced to the operation of unconscious processes. In this view, creativity is

the manifestation of primordial wishes and desires, a process that later psychoanalysts would refer to as regression in the service of the ego. In contrast, the behaviorist B.F. Skinner (1976) argued that it was the schedule of reinforcements impinging on an organism that is responsible for anything we might classify as creative. Skinner goes so far as to suggest that the individual is merely the location where these environmental influences meet and that artists and scientists are no more responsible for their creations than a chicken is responsible for creating an egg. Despite obvious differences between these early approaches to creativity, both embrace a deterministic view of human creativity to the extent that the individual is the location for rather than the origin of the creative process.

More recent approaches to creativity have tended to take either a cognitive or humanistic form. Cognitive approaches to creativity focus on the underlying mental processes that produce novel and innovative creations. Such mental processes are understood mechanistically which means that cognitive investigations of creativity ultimately aim to transform mystical aspects of creativity (inspiration, insight, hunches) into discrete steps in a mental algorithm (Simon, 2001). Much of this research has taken place within the context of artificial intelligence (AI) research and debates surrounding the possibility of building a computer that is capable of simulating human creativity (Cohen, 2002).

The cognitive emphasis on developing a mechanistic explanation of the mental dimensions of creativity is often sharply distinguished from other kinds of investigations of creativity. For example, Boden (1994) makes an important distinction between *psychological* and *historical* investigations of creativity. *Psychological* creativity emphasizes the extent to which a novel configuration is new for the individual who produced it. In this sense, it does not matter if other people or entire societies have produced an identical configuration. All that matters is that this novel configuration was not or could not have been present in an individual's mind before. In contrast, *historical* creativity focuses on those

novel combinations that, having first emerged in an individuals' mind, have also transformed human culture and history. Boden (1994) reserves historical creativity for those unique combinations that, while psychologically creative, are also the first instance of that unique combination emerging in all of human history. Indeed, the distinction between psychological and historical creativity not only makes anything like a cognitive explanation of creativity possible; it also makes history subservient to psychology. This is particularly relevant since much critical scholarship has attempted to invert this relationship.

While cognitive approaches tend to see creativity as another area for demonstrating the efficacy of mechanistic models of mental functioning, humanistic psychologists view creativity as one of the defining characteristics of human existence. In this view, human existence is a project in which each individual fashions himself or herself in a variety of different ways. This means that creativity is not something we only do in certain contexts; it is something we are engaged in at every moment of our lives. The task for humanistic psychology is to bring the fundamentally creative dimensions of human existence into the foreground so that individuals can begin to live a complete and authentic existence. As should be clear, humanistic investigations of creativity draw heavily on existential philosophy.

Humanistic psychologists often emphasize the pivotal role that limitations play in creativity (May, 1975). In doing so, they challenge the common sense identification of creativity with absolute freedom. Creativity does not flourish when all limitations and constraints have been removed but instead when creators have come to terms with the social, cultural, and economic limitations that make a truly novel development intelligible in the first place. In other words, creativity is born out of the confrontation with rather than the obliteration of limits. Interest in the positive role of boundaries has led some scholars to question modern psychology's emphasis on divergent rather than convergent thinking (Kuhn, 1963). This line of questioning suggests

that while divergent thinking may play an important role in creativity, the social conventions and practices that make the recognition of a new creation possible are equally indebted to socialization processes that are largely convergent in nature.

Critical Debates

Despite the many differences between humanistic and cognitive approaches to creativity, both tend to focus on the individual. Recently, scholars working within the tradition of systems theory have challenged this emphasis suggesting that creativity can only be understood by situating the individual in a social and historical context. For example, Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1996) encourages scholars to reflect not just on *what* creativity is but on *where* it is. While psychology has traditionally looked for creativity within the individual mind, he argues that a complete understanding of creativity requires attending not just to the individual but also to the social institutions (field) and stock of knowledge (domain) that make an individual's creative contribution possible.

There are a number of ways that psychological investigations of creativity can contribute to critical scholarship. To begin with, creativity already plays an important though often tacit role in challenging orthodox psychology. Indeed, at its core, social constructionism emphasizes the creative potential of human relationships and the constraining features of conventional psychological research and practice. Moreover, even orthodox researchers have pointed to institutional dimensions of modern psychology (graduate training, specialization, tenure) that ultimately suppress innovation and creativity (Nisbett, 1990).

From reading the psychological literature, one gets the sense that while psychology is all too willing to view creativity as a topic of investigation, it is much less interested in acknowledging that the very notion of creativity may challenge fundamental aspects of modern psychology. In the hands of the critical scholar, debates surrounding creativity have the potential to transform

psychology into a powerful tool for interrogating those entrenched features of modern society that work against the aims of social justice.

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Criminality

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Introduction

From 1878 to 1890, being a member of the Socialist Workers Party was considered a crime

in the German Empire, as was selling, producing, or transporting alcohol in the USA between 1919 and 1933. Consensual sexual intercourse between two men was considered a crime in Western Germany until 1973, and even today, in some countries (e.g., Pakistan, Taiwan, or parts of the USA), adultery is considered a crime, and adulterers, specifically women, are threatened in some countries with capital punishment. While this may seem extreme, it remains to be seen how future generations will judge criminal laws and procedures, which at present seem perfectly reasonable to the majority – e.g., laws concerning drug use or terrorism.

Conversely, certain types of crime which are perpetrated by the economically powerful, such as tax fraud or corporate crimes, are not prosecuted insistently. Moreover, from a critical perspective, it can be argued that common working conditions in western industrialized nations, considered perfectly legal by current law, are an abuse of economic power and thus criminal because they exploit workers by letting them perform surplus labor.

Members of modern societies are seemingly in significant danger of being victims of violent acts considered as “criminal” on a daily basis. There is a widespread fear of crime, which can be explained by the fact that people’s personal property, their right to sexual self-determination, their physical integrity, and their very life seem to be at risk. In many cases, though, this fear is promoted by parts of the media and/or the government in order to legitimate restrictions of personal freedom. History has shown that criminalizing certain forms of unwanted behavior on the one hand while legitimizing unfair practices on the other and promoting fear of crime have always been effective methods of controlling the subordinate. To analyze these methods and develop counter-measures, many critical criminologists and psychologists have put a focus on “criminality.”

Accepting a certain legal definition of crime as a social fact, critical psychologists commonly turn against individualistic explanations of criminal behavior by highlighting social constraints, which make criminal behavior necessary from the point of view of the “criminal.”

Definition

The term “criminality” is commonly used to signify the state or quality of being criminal or as a synonym for “crime” (as in “urban criminality” or “economic criminality”).

In the context of criminal psychology, the term is understood specifically as a (set of) personality feature(s) causing criminal behavior. For the modern science of criminology and criminal psychology, this concept of “criminality” became “raison d’être and the target of its practical proposals” (Garland 2002, 27).

Keywords

Control; violence; society; anomy; feminism; Marxism; anomie theory; classical school; centre for contemporary cultural studies; criminalization; conflict theory; control theory; drift theory; fear of crime; feminist criminology; french school; general theory of crime; incapacitation; labeling theory; life course view; Marxist theory; new criminology; PEN theory; postmodern criminology; psychopathy; scuola positiva; subcultural theory; techniques of neutralization; theory of differential associations; theory of differential opportunities; subject-orientation; subject-science; xyy syndrome; zero tolerance

History

The historical roots of modern mainstream criminology and criminal psychology date back to eighteenth-century Europe. The origin of the concept “criminality” is best understood in the context of a series of modernization projects connected to the development of modern states in Western Europe. In those states, a central administration began to rationally pursue economic, military, treasury, church, and *criminal* policies to reach the goal of “general welfare” as well as control over a growing population. One important issue the administration had to deal with was the misbehavior of a new class of “paupers,” parts of the agricultural and industrial workforces

made redundant by early technical and economic revolutions and crises: Workhouses were established across Western Europe to stop uncontrolled migration (“vagrancy”) and became the predecessors of the modern prison.

Inspired by such developments and the cultural movement of Enlightenment, scholars like Beccaria, Bentham, and Feuerbach, who are today considered proponents of the “classical school” in criminology, proposed reforms of criminal laws and procedures. For example, in his famous text “On Crimes and Punishments” (1764), Beccaria argues for an independent jurisdiction, transparent laws, predictable sentences, as well as a ban on capital punishment and on torture. Addressing man’s natural desire to avoid pain, sense of justice, and capacity of rational thinking, he hoped to increase the efficiency of the legal system. As typical for the scholars of the “classical school,” his suggestions were based on speculative philosophical assumptions about human nature rather than empirical evidence.

Approximately at the same time, bourgeois intellectuals, who strove for “self-understanding,” started to address “criminal behavior,” thereby also defining the self-conception of their newly formed class. Examples include Friedrich Schiller’s “The Criminal of Lost Honour” (1786) and Karl Philipp Moritz’s autobiographic novel “Anton Reiser” (1785). Moritz’s early psychological journal “Gnothi sauton – Magazin für Erfahrungsseelenkunde” (1783–1793) contains several interpretative analyses of criminal biographies. This demonstrates that there was an early subject-oriented alternative to the positivist approach which would soon dominate criminological research.

In the nineteenth century, the methods which had proven to be successful in the natural sciences and engineering were increasingly applied to tackle social subjects. This positivist approach also affected scholarly work on “crime”: On the one hand, the development of a modern bureaucracy allowed the use of statistics to correlatively link the amount of registered crime with certain social, demographic, and environmental variables (like age, gender, poverty, population density, or climate), thereby trying to define the

social causes of crime. Important proponents of this approach were Quetelet in Belgium, Guerry in France, and Rawson in England. On the other hand, the development of prisons and mental asylums allowed the use of medical and anthropological methods to compare physical features and personality traits of criminals (like cranial and facial characteristics, types of temper, or levels of sensitivity) to those of “ordinary” people, often soldiers, thereby trying to define specific types of criminals. This approach was cultivated especially in the Italian *scuola positiva*, most notably by Lombroso in his famous text “Criminal Man” (*L'uomo delinquente*, 1876). Lombroso’s “born criminal” is characterized by atavistic traits and features, is comparable to “savages” or animals, and is destined to commit serious offenses.

The two approaches tended to favor different practical measures to fight crime: While Lombroso and his followers thought it necessary to impose the death penalty or life imprisonment, the French school (represented by Lacassagne and Tarde, among others) assumed that most criminals could be resocialized if they were put under a strict work discipline and pleaded for corresponding reforms of the prison system.

While proponents of the various schools of positivist criminology engaged in heated debates during the nineteenth century, attempts to unify both approaches became more significant at the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, *Franz von Liszt* (German professor of criminal law) stated: “Crime is the product of the characteristics of the offender at the time of the crime and the external circumstances surrounding him at that time” (von Liszt, 1905, 290; emphasis added).

Traditional Debates

While modern mainstream criminologists and criminal psychologists rejected specific theories and methods used by their nineteenth-century predecessors, they generally accepted the positivist approach to “criminality”: Until today, “criminal” behavior is seen as the *effect* yielded by

environmental, social, psychological, or biological *causes*. Often, many variables drawn from very different approaches are included in a multifactorial research design for practical reasons without striving for theoretical integration (a famous early example for this strategy being Glueck & Glueck, 1950).

Some scholars may take a socially critical position to this debate. However, under the premise of a positivist paradigm, the debate can only focus on the question which measures are more or less effective to control “criminal” behavior. The results of traditional positivist research neither take the criminal’s position into account nor do they speak directly to deviant individuals. Moreover, the legal definition of “crime” is typically taken for granted.

Since, in the twentieth century, the center of criminological research shifted from Europe to the United States, where criminology was institutionalized mainly as a branch of sociology, many important criminological theories highlight social and social psychological causes of “criminal” behavior.

In Merton’s *Anomie* or *Strain Theory*, “criminal” behavior is seen as an “innovative” solution to a specific social problem. Merton argues that in certain social structures, some cultural goals are commonly shared (e.g., financial prosperity in contemporary US society), while the institutionalized means necessary to reach those goals (e.g., formal education) are unequally divided. “Criminal” behavior is a viable reaction to this problem since the “limitation of opportunity to unskilled labor and the resultant low income cannot compete in terms of conventional standards of achievement with the high income from organized vice” (Merton, 1938, 678f). Merton’s theory refines the simplistic folk theory according to which “poverty leads to crime.”

Sutherland’s *Theory of Differential Association* (Sutherland, 1947, pp. 5–7) emphasizes the fact that “criminal” behavior is *learned* behavior (as stated earlier in Gabriel Tarde’s “laws of imitation”). Drawing upon social interactionism, Sutherland argues that techniques of committing crime as well as directions of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes are learned in

personal interaction with others. In this process, “frequency,” “duration,” “priority,” and “intensity” of the associations with criminal or anti-criminal behavior are mediating variables. Sutherland’s theory inspired several behaviorist theories of criminal behavior, most notably Akers’ *Differential Reinforcement Theory*.

Cloward and Ohlin later attempted to integrate Merton’s and Sutherland’s approaches. According to them, *Anomie Theory* and *Theory of Differential Association* tackle two sides of the same problem. Whereas the former explicitly recognizes differences in access to legitimate means, the latter implicitly assumes that there must be differences in access to illegitimate means. Cloward and Ohlin propose to integrate both approaches, using the concept of *Differential Opportunity Structures*. “This approach permits us to ask, for example, how the relative availability of illegitimate opportunities affects the resolution of adjustment problems leading to deviant behavior. [...] If, in a given social location, illegal or criminal means are not readily available, then we should not expect a criminal subculture to develop among adolescents” (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, p. 151).

In his *Conflict Theory*, Sellin explains the formation of “criminal” behavior by norm conflicts within an individual’s personality, within a cultural group, or within deviating norms of two different groups. According to Sellin, complex modern societies show “a multitude of social groups. competitive interests, poorly defined interpersonal relationships, social anonymity, a confusion of norms and a vast extension of impersonal control agencies (...). To a large number of persons who live in such a culture, certain life situations are governed by such conflicting norms that no matter what the response of the person in such a situation will be, it will violate the norms of some social group concerned” (Sellin, 1938, pp. 59–60). This view echoes in *subcultural theories* developed, e.g., by Cohen, Miller, Sykes, and Matza, which aim to explain juvenile delinquency.

Control theories of crime can be traced back to early scholars and social scientists like Hobbes (“Leviathan,” 1651) or Durkheim (e.g., “Le

suicide,” 1897). Perhaps the most influential version of this approach put forward in the twentieth century is Hirschi’s *Social Control Theory*: According to him, control theory focuses on the question “Why don’t we do it [i.e. committing crime]?” rather than on the question “Why do they do it?” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 34). In his view, the “attachment” to significant others, the “commitment” to conformity (i.e., the investment of time and energy in the striving for conventional goals), the “involvement” in conventional activities, and the strength of “belief” in the common system of values are the decisive factors that prevent people from committing crimes. Sampson and Laub (1993) later introduced an “age-graded” version of social control theory. They presented statistical evidence from a longitudinal study showing that long-term commitment to marriage and employment tends to end the criminal careers of delinquent juveniles.

While sociological and social psychological aspects tended to dominate the criminological debate on “criminality,” forensic psychiatrists and criminal psychologists developed several theories which focused on biological or individual psychological causes.

An example for a particularly crude biological determinism is the attempt to link gonosomal aberrations (specifically the XYY syndrome) to aggressive and “criminal” behavior. Studies supporting this theory (e.g., Nielsen, Tsuboi, Sturup, & Romano, 1968) soon revealed substantial methodological flaws.

Eysenck incorporated “criminal” behavior in his *PEN model*, thereby linking it to psychological traits as well as biological predispositions. According to this approach, people scoring high on “psychoticism” (P) tend to seek sensations, are tough minded, and lack feelings for others. People scoring high on “extraversion” (E) are cortically under-aroused, therefore seeking for stimulation and showing impulsive and sociable traits. Furthermore, extraverts are supposed to learn less efficiently by conditioning (e.g., by punishment) than introverts. People scoring high on “neuroticism” (N) are characterized by a very sensitive autonomic nervous system, leading to emotional instability. Eysenck expects “persons

with strong antisocial inclinations [...] to have high P, high E, and high N scores" (1977, 58). Empirical studies showed mixed results inducing several revisions of the model. While the PEN model generally has lost its significance for mainstream psychology, at least two of Eysenck's personality dimensions ("extraversion" and "neuroticism") are included in the *Big Five model*, which today is widely accepted as a framework for personality psychology.

According to Canadian psychologist Robert Hare, the most prominent proponent of the concept of "*psychopathy*," "psychopaths" are "individuals, who lacking in conscience and feelings for others, find it easy to use charm, manipulation, intimidation, and violence to control others and to satisfy their own selfish needs" (1998, p. 129). Research results trying to link "psychopathic" traits and behavioral tendencies to neuronal deficits show mixed results and partly suffer from methodological flaws. Furthermore, it is quite possible that detectable neuronal deficits are caused by behavior associated with "psychopathy" (e.g., substance misuse) rather than being the cause of such behavior (Blair, 2003). Attempts to incorporate criteria which are based on moral judgements (like "callousness") into more recent versions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) failed in the early 1990s (Hare, Hurt, & Harpur, 1991): DSM IV's definition of antisocial personality disorder refers relatively strictly to observable facts. This might change in DSM V, though: The proposed revision seems to leave more room for interpretation (see APA 2012). Although the concept of "psychopathy" is far from being generally accepted, Hare's "Psychopathy Checklist" is widely used (e.g., in correctional institutions) as a practical tool to determine the probability of recidivism.

Gottfredson's and Hirschi's *General Theory of Crime* is basically a trait theory, although it draws upon several sources, i.e., classical school, opportunity theory, and control theory. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, crime in general produces short-time pleasure and entails long-time costs. Therefore, people lacking in "self-control" are predestined to engage in

criminal behavior. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, "low self-control" is produced by unfavorable child-rearing practices, specifically "the *absence* of nurturance, discipline or training" (1990, 95), and it is also associated with "impulsive, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk-taking, short-sighted, and nonverbal" (90) behavior. Those lacking in "self-control" are supposed to show a stable pattern of criminal behavior over the life course, eventually ceasing only by "the inexorable aging of the organism" (141).

Critical Debates

A thorough discussion of "criminality" has to address the question which forms of behavior are criminalized and penalized under certain sociohistorical and political conditions. Hence, critical debates concerning psychological aspects of committing crime must be informed by sociology, political science, criminal law, history, and moral philosophy.

From a Marxist point of view, any criminal law is made for the purpose of ensuring the power of the ruling class. Its content and form are shaped by wider social conditions: For example, the idea that punishment should be proportionate to the guilt reflects the capitalist concept of economic equivalence (Paschukanis 2001 [1924]). Marx, rejecting Proudhon's idea of "justice *eternelle*," did *not* criticize existing law on moral grounds. For example, he never accused capitalists of committing assault by applying economic pressure or fraud by taking advantage of the production of surplus value. Analyzing given social relations, Marxists show the connection of living conditions to "immoral" or "criminal" behavior. Engels, for example, regarding the contemporary English working class, points out: "The failings of the workers in general may be traced (...) to the general inability to sacrifice the pleasure of the moment to a remoter advantage. But is that to be wondered at? (...) A class about whose education no one troubles himself, which is a playball to a thousand chances, knows no security in life – what incentives has such a class to providence, to

“respectability”, to sacrifice the pleasure of the moment for a remoter enjoyment, most uncertain precisely by reason of the perpetually varying, shifting conditions under which the proletariat lives?” (Engels, 1972, p. 355f). This view is echoed in modern analyses like Sennett’s “The Corrosion of Character” (1998). More or less neglecting worker’s subjectivity, Engels goes on to say: “The contempt for the existing social order is most conspicuous in its extreme form – that of offences against the law. If the influences demoralising to the working-man act more powerfully, more concentratedly than usual, he becomes an offender as certainly as water abandons the fluid for the vaporous state at 80 degrees, Réaumur.” This passage shows the dangers of an economistic analysis that reduces human beings to objects and their actions to effects yielded by social causes.

As early as 1859, Marx analyzed changes in the code of criminal procedures, leading to a decriminalization of some types of juvenile delinquency and a sudden decline of statistically recorded crime (Marx, 1971, pp. 490ff). In the 1960s, the *labeling approach* (developed by Lemert, Becker, Goffman, and others) targeted the social construction of crime as an object of inquiry instead of taking legal definitions of crime for granted. In his seminal work “Outsiders,” Becker famously stated: “(...) social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders” (Becker, 1963, p. 9).

At about the same time, David Matza developed his *drift theory* drawing on his earlier work on *techniques of neutralization* (Sykes & Matza 1957, delinquency), control theory, and a rational choice approach (as introduced by the classical school). The premise for this approach is the assumption that delinquents engage in infractions to overcome a mood of despair and fatalism (neutralizing the legal bind) and to restore a mood of humanism and a sense of responsibility for one’s own fate (Matza, 1964).

In 1968, a very productive critical movement started to form in the UK, influenced by the aforementioned US American developments in

criminological theory, and centered on the National Deviancy Council (NDC). In their groundbreaking work “The New Criminology,” Walton, Taylor, and Young (1973) tackled the most important theoretical questions brought up by this movement. According to them, a critical criminology had to explain the interaction between human agency and social structure, consider regional contexts and the wider scope of society, discuss the making as well as the breaking of law, and deal with the main structural elements age, class, gender, and ethnicity. An equally influential approach emerging in the context of the NDC was developed at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (delinquency).

Another critical movement which gained momentum in the late 1960s is feminist criminology. This approach is concerned with criminal law, prosecution techniques, and criminal procedures, which are discriminating against women. Already since the nineteenth century, feminists have advocated for the criminalization of marital rape. In the course of the twentieth and twenty-first century, most nations penalized marital rape, but its prosecution remains a crucial issue of feminist critique and activism. Moreover, some feminist criminologists oppose two trends in criminology and the social sciences: On the one hand, some disapprove with mainstream quantitative “macho methods” of the scientific community, especially in cases where these methods apply overly sophisticated procedures to data of questionable quality. They argue that those methods represent and perpetuate social inequalities. On the other hand, criticism is raised against the academic pressure “to emulate the *theoretical obscurity* of males by developing feminist theories that are so intellectually impenetrable that they both disempower and silence women” (Chesney-Lind, 1997, p. 3).

Drawing upon Lyotard’s notion of the “demise of the grand narrative,” postmodern criminologists believe “that seeking to legitimate critical knowledge through earlier metanarratives of emancipation is no longer tenable” (Pavlich, 1999, 42). Instead, they seek to legitimate critique by “paralogy,” a critical practice aiming to show pre-suppositions of certain discourses, to petition

actors to accept different presuppositions, and to generate ideas and new statements. Such “criticism need not entail the practice of comparing, or judging, local “realities” with “universal” principles—rather it could aim to develop an ethos that continuously directs itself to absence, the otherness, which makes possible the so-called “realities” contained by given historical limits. Continually pointing to the constitutive place of contingent deferrals to absence could expose the non-essential, nonnecessary, character of any limits that espouse an inevitability” (ibid., p. 43f). Critics see this movement as a retreat to the academic ivory tower, leaving inhumane theories and practices untouched (Young, 2002).

Laub and Samson (2006), unsatisfied by the incapacity of their aforementioned study to reveal the inner logic of delinquent careers, as it relied exclusively on statistical methods, recently turned towards a subject-oriented approach by developing a “life course view.” This approach is characterized by “(1) a focus on the historical time and place that recognizes that lives are embedded and shaped by context; (2) the recognition that the developmental impact of life events is contingent on when they occur in a person’s life – that is, timing matters; (3) the acknowledgement of intergenerational transmission of social patterns – the notion of linked lives and interdependency; and (4) the view that human agency plays a key role in making choices and constructing one’s life course” (ibid., p. 33). Aiming “to link social history and social structure to the unfolding of human lives” (ibid.), they applied qualitative interviews as the preferred method of inquiry.

International Relevance

The International Society for Criminology (ISC) was established in 1938. It publishes the *International Annals of Criminology* and organizes the World Congress of Criminology.

On a national level, many organizations such as the American Society of Criminology provide special divisions for critical criminology, and international conferences with critical impetus are held on a regular basis.

The international relevance of theories and practices concerning “criminality” is evidenced by a plethora of encyclopedic works (e.g., the “Oxford Handbook of Criminology”), some of which focus on critical criminology (e.g., the “Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology”).

Practice Relevance

Critical reflection on “criminality” is of practical relevance on many levels: Either by addressing governmental agencies or by encouraging and taking part in social activism, critical criminologists and criminal psychologists can influence the making of laws and procedures as well as their realization in practice. They can influence the way in which prisoners are treated in correctional institutions and after their release. Finally, they can influence the way in which victims of criminal acts are treated.

Future Directions

According to Young (2002), in late modernity market forces create an unequal, less meritocratic society, encourage egoism, and thereby create social conditions which have a higher criminogenic impact. Neoliberal and neoconservative forces face these developments with zero-tolerance policies in prosecution and with the incapacitation of “criminals” by imprisonment. This trend is most apparent in the USA where regulations such as the “three-strikes” rule have led to an incarceration rate of approximately 0.75 % in the course of the 2000s. In the coming years, it appears to be one of the most urgent tasks for critical criminologists and criminal psychologists in the Western world to openly criticize these policies, showing their inefficiency and inhumanity (e.g., Wacquant, 2002). Certainly, however, there are various other topics of similar significance: such as women’s and children’s rights, anti-drug and anti-terror policies, and the lack of prosecution for corporate crimes, among others.

Critical psychologists might in the future increasingly resort to subject-oriented or even subject-scientific concepts and methods in order to overcome the limitations of traditional research. This implies the deployment of qualitative and participative research methods, thereby giving a voice to the subjects of research, considering their standpoint, their particular position in society, and the reasons for their actions.

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Online Resources

- <http://www.critcrim.org>
<http://www.isc-sic.org/web/>
<http://wcon2011.com/>
http://www.crimejusticeconference.com/attach/CJSD_Conference_Proceedings.pdf

Cross-Cultural Psychology, Overview

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Introduction

Cross-cultural psychology is a subfield of psychology that is built upon a positivist model of science. Historically it has developed out of

natural scientific studies in psychology and anthropology and stands in contrast to hermeneutic studies in these fields. Traditionally it has been caught in the ontological and epistemological debates of nature versus nurture and emics versus etics and has been criticized for its philosophical and methodological assumptions. It continues to develop alongside the complementary perspectives of cultural psychology and indigenous psychologies and has been applied internationally to numerous practical issues.

Definition

Cross-cultural psychology is an area of psychology that is concerned with uniformity and variation of psychological abilities, processes, and characteristics across cultures. It strives to be a scientific discipline that makes use of observation and measurement of psychological variables and seeks causal explanations for psychological similarities and differences recorded across cultures. The goals of cross-cultural psychology include the development of general laws of human thought and behavior as well as the explanation of specific variations of characteristics measured by standardized testing. Integration of knowledge on these cultural similarities and differences into a grand explanatory theory of psychology is also sought. The main areas of study for cross-cultural psychology include cognition, perception, intelligence, language, emotions, personality, development, acculturation, social, morality, health, disorders, treatments, evolution, and self (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992).

Cross-cultural psychology is contrasted and complemented by the perspectives of cultural psychology and indigenous psychologies. It is differentiated from cultural psychology on philosophical and methodological grounds where cross-cultural psychology is practiced as a positivist natural science, while cultural psychology is practiced as a hermeneutical human science. *Cultural psychology* is the study of intentional worlds, its goal is to understand the experiences of people as embedded in cultural

worlds of meaning where shared understanding and participation in the construction of those shared meanings is an ongoing process that involves the mutual construction of both the collective intentional world and the experiences of individuals (Shweder, 1990). This view recognizes the dialectics of psychosocial life as it is generated through cultural activities and is engaged in meaning-making through common activity and ritual. It is largely based upon the Vygotskian perspective of sociohistorical development of mind, self, and culture where emphasis is placed upon understanding the intentionality, agency, and teleological activity of everyday practical experiences (Ratner, 1997). In recent years the term cultural psychology has also been used by many to denote a perspective that makes use of cross-cultural methods within the framework of examining the relationship between culture and mind and culture as an evolutionary force (Rozin, 2010).

Indigenous psychologies are a collection of psychological models and practices that arise from various locations around the globe, each rooted in traditional cultural systems of knowledge and practice. The indigenous approach to psychology involves being “native” and not transplanted. It examines mundane activities and behavior through locally derived frameworks and categories and is designed to be culturally relevant and appropriate to its participants and their cultural communities (Sinha, 1997).

Keywords

Cultural psychology; indigenous psychology; völkerpsychologie; völkgeist; absolutism; relativism; universalism; emics; etics; culture; hermeneutics; positivism; artifacts; operationalism; verstehen; besseverstehen; activity theory

History

Early Foundations

The history of cross-cultural (and cultural) psychology can be traced back to early Greek

scholars, while indigenous psychologies can be traced back many thousands of years. Most historical accounts begin with enlightenment scholars who were interested in the empirical study of cultural influences on psychological characteristics. Cross-cultural psychology traces its origins to the works of early scholars like Joseph Marie Degérando (1772–1842), Edward Burnet Tylor (1832–1917), William Halse Rivers (1864–1922), Francis Galton (1822–1911), and Frederic Bartlett (1886–1969). These scholars conducted studies of topics such as visual illusions and tests of hearing, smell, taste, cutaneous and muscular sense, as well as reaction times and other empirical measurements of psychological abilities across cultures (Jahoda & Krewer, 1997).

Cultural psychology arises from the works of early scholars such as Giovanni Battista Vico (1668–1704), Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), Heymann Steinthal (1823–1899), and Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) who gave rise to the study of *Völkerpsychologie*. These scholars shared interest in the *Völkgeist* (collective consciousness) of cultures as expressed in art, poetry, myth, custom, and language. The Russian cultural-historical school was later developed by Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and Alexander Luria (1902–1977) who were also influenced by Hegelian and Marxist ideas of dialecticism between individual consciousness and their cultures (Cole, 1996; Jahoda & Krewer, 1997).

In the USA, the culture and personality school flourished which challenged assumptions of universality and turned attention toward “native” approaches. Important contributions came from Franz Boas (1858–1942), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), Ruth Benedict (1887–1948), Margaret Mead (1901–1978), Cora DuBois (1903–1991), and later Erik Erikson (1902–1994). A leading proponent of this critical anthropology was Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) who refuted the universality of psychoanalysis and came to influence the growth of indigenous perspectives in anthropology and psychology (Paranjpe, 1998).

The Modern Era

In the 1960s cross-cultural psychology emerged as a clearly recognized subfield of psychology where the *Journal of Social Psychology* began publishing studies on cross-cultural topics. By 1966 the *International Journal of Psychology* was established, soon followed by the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* in 1970. The 1972 *Annual Review of Psychology* included a chapter on psychology and culture as the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology and the Society for Cross-Cultural Research were formed. By 1973 the Directory of cross-cultural research and researchers reported 1,125 psychologists. In 1978 the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* was established, and in 1980 the first edition of the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* had been published. These developments brought cross-cultural psychology to the mainstream (Berry et al., 1992; Jahoda & Krewer, 1997).

In the 1980s indigenous psychological accounts became more commonplace such as Heelas and Lock's (1981) volume on indigenous psychologies which had been followed by several publications over the next decades (Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006; Sinha, 1997). Cultural psychology had been clearly articulated by 1990, and the journal *Culture and Psychology* was first published in 1995 which focuses on cultural accounts. Today, psychological research and practice on culture and psychology has become widespread where a PsycINFO abstract search will garner some 48,000 citations.

Traditional Debates

Nature Versus Nurture

The nature-nurture debate is concerned with the relative importance of inherited versus acquired influences on psychological traits, abilities, and processes. Cross-cultural psychology, by its very nature, is arguably best situated to examine the nature-nurture debate. The range of ideas on the nature-nurture debate in psychology can be classified into one of three types of interpretation

representing the views of absolutism, relativism, and universalism (Berry et al., 1992). *Absolutism* is the position that holds biological factors responsible for psychological phenomena where species-wide basic psychological processes are studied. *Relativism* stands in dialectical opposition to absolutism holding that cultural factors are central in causing psychological phenomena. These views are reflected in the nature orientation of sociobiologists and the nurture orientation of social constructionists. While these perspectives hold that biological or cultural influences have exclusive bearing, Boyd and Richerson offer a dual inheritance model representing *universalism*, a synthesis of these two opposing views. This cultural evolutionary model stems from the pioneering work of Donald Campbell and Richard Dawkins and has influenced many contemporary scholars who recognize both genetic and cultural influences on the evolution of the human mind and culture (Rozin, 2010).

Emics Versus Etics

A related debate in cross-cultural psychology is the emic-etic debate which is concerned with the goals of knowledge production. The emic-etic debate considers whether universal (transcultural) features or specific (local cultural) characteristics should be the focus of research and understanding. Those who seek only universal characteristics advocate the position of searching only for *etics*. Conversely, those who are only interested in culturally specific features seek the *emics* of one or more cultures. Historically, cross-cultural psychology has developed the goal of finding etic features of psychology as measured by tests and instruments developed in one local (emic) context. These tests are often assumed to measure universal psychological characteristics when transported to test the abilities of people from other cultures. Berry et al. (1992) refer to this as an *imposed etic* that is ethnocentric in nature and is often discovered as an imposter only when the second culture offers contrasting concepts from their own indigenous emic. At this juncture two possible courses of action may ensue. One is to maintain a separation between

cultures and their study, assuming cultural relativism and the incommensurate nature of perspectives. Alternatively, one might recognize that not all constructs are translatable (commensurate) but that common ground between emics may be discovered. In resolution of this debate, Berry et al. refer to three perspectives that arise: (1) *imposed etics*, emics imposed from one culture on another, pretending to be universal; (2) *emics*, a plurality of local perspectives; and (3) the pursuit of *derived etics* through an ongoing comparison of indigenous emics toward the development of cultural universals. These perspectives largely align with the interpretive stances of absolutism, relativism, and universalism.

Critical Debates

Much of the critique of cross-cultural psychology comes from a hermeneutical perspective. Hermeneutics involves a critical examination of ontological, epistemological, and evaluative claims in science and other human practices. In fact, “hermeneutic thought seeks to criticize the position that the methods and criteria of the natural sciences are normative for all forms of intellectual activity and that an ahistorical, objective, empirical account is sufficient” (Woolfolk, Sass, & Messer, 1988, p. 3).

Ontological Hermeneutics: Critique of “Culture”

The definition and conceptualization of culture has been debated since the early days of psychological anthropology and cross-cultural psychology. Historically, conceptualizations of culture have been tied to “race” or perceived biological differences among peoples. Ethnocentric terms like “savages” or “primitives” have also been used to identify people from groups seen to be biologically and culturally inferior to their own, as seen in Carolus Linnaeus’ 1735 *System of Nature* (Cole, 1996). While some advocate such absolutist orientations today, most contemporary cross-cultural psychologists define culture

through descriptive accounts of behaviors, rules and norms, structural accounts of organizations, and historical traditions. Keith (2011) reviews several contemporary definitions of culture ranging from information sharing among a group of people to the use of tangible objects as well as the development of a subjective sense of culture through everyday practices. He concludes that culture is a “group of shared behaviors, values, and beliefs that are passed from generation to generation” (p. 4) that forms into a variety of constellations of features. While these cross-cultural definitions cover a range of features of what culture is, they tend to view culture as an objectively definable variable that can be quantified.

Ratner (1997) offers a critique of positivist cross-cultural psychology based upon its faulty ontological and epistemological assumptions. First, positivist psychology assumes that psychological phenomena are conceptualized as separate, independent variables that can be easily objectified and quantified. Culture too is seen in this manner where it is reduced to observable properties of a shared environment. This type of philosophical atomism fragments culture into superficial and trivial features and fails to acknowledge the systemic processes that comprise a living cultural tradition. Ratner points out that this atomism “obscures the nature of psychological phenomena” (p. 21), also failing to recognize that culture is a complex configuration of meanings expressed through extended responses to ongoing social situations and contexts.

Building from the Russian cultural-historical school of psychology, Cole (1996) presents culture as a labyrinth of meaning expressed through people’s interaction with artifacts of culture that are at one of three levels. *Primary artifacts* are objects of significance to everyday activities (i.e., axe, bowl, needle). *Secondary artifacts* are the representations of those objects in terms of their use and meaning in the forms of recipes, traditional beliefs, norms, schemas, scripts, and roles. *Tertiary artifacts* are imaginative works of art, products, and creative processes. Culture involves all of these types of artifacts and their

mutual influences as well as human engagement with them and the activities, meanings, and understandings people develop in relation to them. Culture, as mediated by our relationships to artifacts, is both *subjective* (experiential) and *objective* (material). This dialectical approach to activity and practice views culture and human experience as intertwined and not separable. In essence, the distinctions between cross-cultural and cultural definitions can be understood through their advocate’s commitments to Heideggerian modes of being (Woolfolk et al., 1988). Cross-cultural psychologists typically adopt a mode of *disengaged being* (present at hand), while cultural psychologists adopt a mode of *engaged being* (ready to hand).

Methodological Hermeneutics: Critique of Positivism

Cross-cultural psychology is grounded in the worldview of positivist natural science, while cultural psychology is grounded in the human science tradition of hermeneutics. Since its inception, psychology has been a house divided between these perspectives, and extensive methodological debates exist between them. Controlled experiments are the ideal model in general psychology for determining causes of psychological phenomena; however, because it is impractical and unethical to conduct such experiments on cultural influences, cross-cultural psychologists often substitute quasi-experiments, naturalistic, and statistical methods to determine the causal influences of culture on psychological variables (Berry et al., 1992). These methods invoke operationalism, objective observation, and quantification that determine the causal laws behind the manifestation of psychological phenomena.

Operationalism has been strongly criticized in cross-cultural psychology because it reduces psychological phenomena to behaviors by assuming that psychological phenomena *are* overt behaviors. This faulty assumption leads to mismeasurement where “operational definitions fail to recognize that a particular phenomenon may be expressed in different acts and that a particular act may express different

phenomena” (Ratner, 1997, p. 44). Positivism also assumes that “valid knowledge must be obtained by direct observation of obvious patterns” (Ratner, p. 39) accompanied by the quantification of behaviors by reducing qualitative variations into quantitative differences. “Quantifying the degree of a phenomenon works against investigating qualitative variations because measurement implies that quality is uniform” (Ratner, p. 27). Because of these failings, claims of causality can be rejected as erroneous and misguided (Cole, 1996). To remedy these shortcomings, Ratner, Cole, and others (such as Jerome Bruner) advocate the development of a qualitative cultural psychology that embraces methodological hermeneutics and activity theory in developing a better understanding of the relationships between culture and psychology. Borrowing from the hermeneutics of Wilhelm Dilthey, the notion of the hermeneutical circle is used to identify cultural psychology methods as being always open and revisable along with grounding interpretation in preexisting knowledge and assumptions. Dilthey’s methodological principles of *verstehen* and *besserverstehen* also play important roles in cultural-psychological methods. *Verstehen* involves understanding the lived experience of people through the extrication of meaning from verbal expressions and behaviors expressed within a sociohistorical context. *Besserverstehen*, or “better understanding,” is the ultimate goal of cultural psychology which seeks to go beyond subjective experience to “elucidate features, relationships, and dynamics of psychological phenomena that may not appear in subjective experience” (Ratner, 1997, p. 61). Building from Russian cultural-historical *activity theory*, cultural psychologists call for a systemic structural analysis of cultural artifacts and activities including the deciphering of important characteristics and relationships between cultural-psychological phenomena, such as tools, art, concepts, roles, situations, and other expressions of engaged being (Cole, 1996).

Challenges have also been raised against cross-cultural psychology as being hegemonic, ethnocentric, and not representative of people from other regions and cultures (Sinha, 1997).

Many advocates of indigenous approaches seek self-rule and empowerment in response to their experiences of colonial denigration of their traditional knowledge systems (Paranjpe, 1998). They also caution against the drive for a single universal psychology at the expense of others where the loss of emic knowledge systems, languages, and cultures through “globalization” has effectively lead to a cultural genocide for many (Davis, 2009). These scholars advocate a state of intellectual pluralism where various indigenous systems are recognized on an equal basis and not as lesser developed or erroneous systems.

International Relevance

Cross-cultural psychology is essentially international since it is primarily interested in the comparison of cultures that exist across nationalities. International activities are central to much of cross-cultural psychology through cross-national comparisons and the examination of national cultures. Additionally, various indigenous and traditional psychologies are expressed from a wide variety of nations, each offering their own unique perspectives that are grounded in their eco-cultural locations. International organizations of psychology embrace the study of cross-cultural, indigenous, and cultural psychology, and members can be found across the Americas, throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Sinha (1997) identifies the growth and development of indigenous psychologies in a variety of nations including Africa, India, China, Japan, Korea, Latin America, Turkey, the Philippines, and Pakistan.

Practice Relevance

While cross-cultural psychology began as the scientific study of universal features of psychology in a few specific areas, cross-cultural perspectives have come to infiltrate much of mainstream psychological research and practice. A full range of topics have been extensively studied as part of cross-cultural psychology in the

areas of acculturation, child-rearing, life span development, education, social behavior, health, communication, organizations and work, psychopathology, psychotherapy, and well-being (Berry et al., 1992; Keith, 2011).

Future Directions

Central debates in research, practice, theoretical, and applied areas will no doubt continue into the future along with diversification, indigenization, and the pursuit of derived etics. Diversification will continue to examine historically marginalized cultural groups and bring voice to their issues, concerns, politics, and dynamics of culture (Lips & Lawson, 2011). Indigenization will expectedly involve theoretical (development of distinct conceptual frameworks), structural (institutional and organizational), and substantive (content) contributions (Sinha, 1997). The indigenization processes are expected to develop for many cultures from the initial importation and implantation of foreign (imposter etic) psychologies through to indigenization and later autochthonization (Adair, 2006). In order for complete autochthonization to occur, there needs to be a critical mass of researchers who are sensitive to make use of culturally relevant variables in their work. There also needs to be contributions made to local understanding and a greater utilization of indigenous curricula and classroom teaching along with the development of graduate training programs to develop infrastructure and sustain the accomplishments made. Technology will also play a significant role in how we experience, transmit, and understand culture and psychological phenomena.

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Online Resources

Organizations

American Psychological Association International Psychology (Division 52). <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div52.aspx>

Canadian Psychological Association Section on International and Cross-Cultural Psychology. <http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpassections/internationalandcrossculturalpsychology/>

International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology. <http://www.iaccp.org/>

International Association of Applied Psychology. <http://www.iaapsy.org/>

International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS). <http://www.iupsys.net/>

Journals

Culture & Psychology. <http://cap.sagepub.com/>

International Journal of Psychology. <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/pp/00207594.html>

Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology. <http://jcc.sagepub.com/>

Crowd Psychology

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Introduction

The topic of crowd psychology has at times been central to the subdiscipline of social psychology, and at other times marginal. Its relative prominence in textbooks and curricula has partly reflected the extent to which wider society has seen “the crowd” as a major social problem. So-called “crowd science” first emerged in late nineteenth-century France as a response to the perceived threat of “the mob” to the social order and indeed to civilization itself. Today, “crowd psychology,” or “crowd behavior,” typically refers to the topic of conflict in crowds, the “problem” specified by this first wave of theory. However, there are other areas of study that fall under the heading of crowd psychology, more broadly conceived. One is the study of crowds in emergencies. Another is the study of the effects of crowding. Sociological accounts of crowd behavior have also

been put forward. Indeed from the outset there has been discussion about whether the topic of the crowd falls within the scope of social psychology or sociology or whether instead it occupies a space between the two.

Definition

The topic of crowd psychology is usually denoted as “crowd behavior,” or even “crowd dynamics” (e.g., Reicher, 2001) – though the latter more often refers to a field of study within civil engineering and applied mathematics (e.g., Still, 2000).

Reicher (1984) provides a definition of a crowd which serves to specify the explanatory problem for theories of crowd conflict: a crowd is a group of people interacting face to face, in a relatively novel situation, and with no formal means of collective decision-making. The problem for theory is therefore to explain how it is that in such situations collective behavior is possible. There is little to explain of course, if people are physically co-present but *not* acting as one; and there is also little to explain if the hundreds or thousands of people acting as one are being guided through chains of command (as in an army). But in situations such as that of many “riots,” where there is no obvious decision-making mechanism or formal leadership, how is it that people are able to act as one?

Reicher and Drury (2011) distinguish between “psychological” and “physical” crowds (or aggregates) to conceptualize some of the differences between those groups of people who are simply co-present in the same physical space and those who are also together in a psychological sense. In psychological crowds, but not physical ones, it is argued that people define themselves in terms of a common social category; in other words, they share a social identity. A shared social identity makes collective behavior possible in both collective conflict and many instances of mass emergencies and helps make sense of some of the variability found in responses to situations of crowding.

Keywords

Crowd; riot; protest; demonstration; emergency; crowding; social identity

Traditional Debates

The earliest debates in crowd psychology concerned whether individuals could be held personally responsible for what they did in violent crowd events or whether instead they were “swept away” and psychologically transformed by being a member of a crowd. The “group mind” argument, that the crowd subsumed the individual personality, was exemplified in the work of Gustave Le Bon (1895), who popularized the concepts of submergence, suggestibility, and contagion. The individualist argument was most cogently presented by Floyd Allport (1924), for whom notions of predisposition and social facilitation meant that there was no need to posit a separate crowd psychology. Each side shared the view, however, that psychological processes in crowds were primitive and instinctual, and this for them explained what they saw as the inherent tendency to uncontrolled violence in crowds. Le Bon was by far the most influential of all the early “crowd scientists.” The ideas he proposed were highly praised and in fact borrowed with little alteration by Freud (1921); and the dominant account of crowd behavior in social psychology from the 1960s to the 1980s, “deindividuation” theory, directly transposed his argument that anonymity in crowds leads to a loss of self and hence of self-control (see Postmes & Spears, 1998, for a critical review).

The assumption that the crowd was a source of irrationality, or at least reduced intelligence, was reproduced in the concept of “mass panic” (e.g., McDougall, 1920). Theories of “mass panic” referred to “contagion” to explain why irrational fear supposedly spreads easily in a crowd in the face of threat (Bendersky, 2007), leading to dysfunctional outcomes such as troop indiscipline in military contexts and, in civilian contexts (such as fires in nightclubs), deaths through blocked exits, crushes, and trampling.

The idea that the crowd was a source of collective psychological dysfunction was also evident in social psychological accounts of both “bystander intervention” and the effects of crowding. In these accounts, as the size of the group increases, there is also an increase in pathology, stress, distress, and antisocial behaviors and a decrease in cognitive capacity, well-being, and prosocial behaviors (for critiques, see Levine, Collins, & Manning, 2007; Novelli, Drury, & Reicher, 2010).

Critical Debates

Psychological theories of crowd behavior have from the beginning been deeply political. “Crowd science” was an intervention in class struggles (Van Ginneken, 1992). Le Bon, for example, was explicit that the purpose of his writing was to help the ruling class combat and harness the power of the working class crowd and to prevent any tendencies to democracy or socialism.

Both “group mind” and individualist theories are also deeply ideological in their implications. In presenting crowd conflict as an expression of simple, primitive drives or a descent into irrationality, they deny the role of groups outside the crowd, such as the police or army, in the development of violence, and they therefore deny any meaning or purpose to crowd action. These theories also rationalize the use of coercive force against the crowd as the most appropriate form of state response (Stott & Reicher, 1998). Le Bon’s ideas on leadership and rhetoric are said to have influenced Mussolini and Hitler, though it has been argued that the ideological content of these fascist leaders’ speeches was more important than their adoption of Le Bon’s suggested techniques of repetition and simplicity (Reicher, 1996c).

Empirically, the early theories of crowd behavior failed to explain not only the absence of violence in many crowd events but also the patterns and meaningful limits to behavior found in even the most violent crowd conflicts (Reicher, 1984, 2001). Alternative accounts attempted to move away from notions of primitive drives,

irrationality, and mindlessness. Instead, they posited norms (Turner & Killian, 1957) or individual decision-making (Berk, 1974) as explanations for collective behavior.

The argument that crowd conflict can be understood as normatively structured and shaped by cognition was pursued further in the social identity approach (Reicher, 1987). While the “group mind” and individualist accounts suggested that the self was lost or reduced in the crowd, the social identity approach suggests, by contrast, that we have social as well as personal identities and that the former are based on our group memberships. In this account, the crowd is another form of group. Psychological crowd membership involves not the loss of self, but a shift from personal to social identity and hence to collective understandings of appropriate conduct. Thus, the limits and patterns observed in crowd behavior reflect the social identity shared by participants – as illustrated in Reicher’s (1984) study of the St Paul’s riot of 1980.

Crowd events sometimes develop and change in form, as conflict become legitimized; and crowd participants themselves change – becoming politicized and empowered through their experiences in crowd events. While most crowds are not conflictual, and hence these psychological changes are the exception, they nevertheless point to the need for a theory that allows for meaningful psychological transformation in crowds, as well as psychological determination. Thus, the elaborated social identity model (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996a, 1996b; Stott & Reicher, 1998) suggests that the conditions for conflict to emerge and develop in an otherwise peaceful crowd are twofold. The first condition is *an asymmetry of categorical representations* between crowd participants and a relevant out-group such as the police. For example, where crowd members understand their behavior as legitimate, police might define it as a threat to “public order.” The second condition is *an asymmetry of power relations* such that the police out-group is able to impose its definition of legitimate conduct on the ingroup of crowd participants – for example, by forming cordons or making baton charges. If these conditions are in place, a series

of dynamics, or group psychological changes, can occur. Specifically, where out-group action is experienced by crowd participants as not only *illegitimate* (thereby legitimizing crowd action against it) but also *indiscriminate* (i.e., as an action against “everyone” in the crowd), then crowd participants come to define themselves through a more inclusive ingroup self-categorization, superseding any previous divisions within the physical crowd. The formation of a single large psychological crowd, along with the feelings of consensus and the expectations of mutual ingroup support that are thereby engendered, *empowers* members of the crowd ingroup actively to oppose the police out-group.

Most of the research on crowd psychology from a social identity perspective has addressed the issue of crowd conflict. However, the concept of social identity provides the theoretical basis for a non-pathologizing explanation for a range of crowd psychological phenomena, including cooperative behavior in mass emergencies (Drury, 2012), experiences in crowds at music events (Neville & Reicher, 2011), aspects of mass pilgrimages (Cassidy et al., 2007), responses to crowding (Novelli et al., 2010), and social movement participation (Drury, Reicher, & Stott, 2003). The social identity account, in which crowd events are understood as meaningful forms of action taking place in intergroup relationships and which may therefore contribute to social change, also brings psychological accounts of crowd behavior into line with many assumptions about groups and identity in contemporary social psychology (Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2009) and also with critical perspectives in sociology, political science, and cultural history (e.g., Thompson, 1971).

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Online Resources

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21582041.2011.625626#.UtjDpfut_cs
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/affiliates/panic/Other%20research%20on%20crowds.html>

Cultural Imperialism

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Introduction

Since the dawn of civilization, human beings have struggled for hegemony, both the hegemony of physical domination and hegemony of shared meaning. Although the ancient empires dominated far lands and cultures, everywhere adjacent

cultural entities mixed and successively dominated each other until one absorbed the other or both were overwhelmed by a third political entity. This struggle shows up today in names of people and places, language, religion, and local customs. Moreover, in centuries past, some civilizations seem to have been more busy dominating their neighbors than others.

The term “cultural imperialism” has been used during the last 50–60 years, most of the time by its critics and in the pejorative sense. It marks attempts to put an end to the colonial era and colonial values. It seems that the term emerges along with other expressions of radical criticisms of the 1960s. Its most well-known analyst has been the post-colonialist Edward Said through his influential book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978). Said shows that western constructions of the orient promote notions of a western hegemony of values. Other important analysts have been Noam Chomsky, Michel Foucault, and Gayatri Spivak.

Definition

Our discussion here will follow Tomlinson (1991), who contends that the definition of cultural imperialism must be assembled out of its discourse. One source (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1977) defines cultural imperialism as “the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture” (p. 303). Another source (Barker, 1989) gives the culture part of the definition a secondary role, relating to it as a by-product of economic interest and oppression. *Imperialism* has at least two aspects: political and economic (Williams, 1981). *Culture* has even more facets, including social knowledge and belief, ingrained values, expression in the arts, customs, and practices, that create a collective worldview within a society.

Many theorists focus on the media, which seems to be the major carrier of cultural imperialism. An influential theorist in communication theory has defined the term as the method by which a peripheral society is brought into the

capitalist system when its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping its social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the culture and actual organizations of the western economically developed system, foreign to the peripheral system (Schiller, 1976; elaborated by White, 2001). White explains that this, as well as the other definitions mentioned above, basically means that cultural imperialism is the domination of one nation by another. This domination is usually accomplished by political and/or economic controls.

Keywords

Colonialism; cultural hegemony; cultural appropriation; culture; economic oppression; ethnocide; imperialism; *orientalism*

Traditional Debates

Arguably, the most basic of the traditional debates is between proponents and opponents of cultural imperialism. American and Western European scholars, politicians, industrialists, and business people often evoke freedom, human rights and democracy, and values that are, or should be, universal. Levitt (1983), for example, has contended that corporations bending to local tastes are doomed to failure. Often, the debate centers around whether peripheral cultures deserve to survive, although at times proponents of capitalist globalization are willing to offer some compromise with overrun cultures.

Among those more sensitive to the conquered cultures, there are debates concerning the value of cultures voluntarily importing western values. Adversaries debate the morality and advisability of actively discouraging agents of the dominated culture from embracing elements of the dominating culture and particularly of the dominating culture representing a banal consumerism. Debates have shed a great deal of heat, and some light, on the practice of some societies banning, or extremely limiting, access of its

residents to the Internet, just as a generation or two ago these countries banned travel outside the cultural sphere of the country.

Critical Debates

Cultural imperialism is inevitably linked with cultural relativism and social constructivism, and debates concerning these two concepts also deal with cultural imperialism. More complex debates are concerned with critiques of western feminism and its caricature of the third world woman as being excluded from the power structure (Mohanty, 2003). Development theory has also been criticized, where critics claim that developmentalists advance western hegemony (Dossa, 2007).

An influential debate deals with Rothkopf's article "In Praise of Cultural Imperialism" (Rothkopf, 1997). Rothkopf contends that western culture promulgates values of tolerance and cultural diversity that reduce conflict among cultures. He believes that the freedom to accept or reject foreign influence stems from these values. These arguments, at the bottom line, stem from the western origins of the term "cultural imperialism," and the article is an attempt to provoke his critics on logical grounds.

Perhaps the most significant figure in critique of cultural imperialism is Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and activist. He has developed the concept of *concientizacion*, or "critical consciousness." Freire believed that literacy can be a powerful tool to take back the birthright of the disenfranchised, and he applied his methods to the illiterate in his homeland, inspiring many to spread his work. The dissemination of literacy via his critical pedagogy is designed to arrive at an understanding of the unconscious erosion of oppressed humanity caused by cultural imperialism and to provide an antidote.

Ignacio Martin-Baró, a social psychologist and Jesuit priest, was a committed friend of Freire. He founded liberation psychology, which actively opposes imperialism, and was murdered by the El Salvador government. Martin-Baró (1994) had much criticism for traditional psychology, which

he believed to represent North American culture and therefore party to weakening the values of Latin American society. He saw North American psychology (which Latin American psychology absorbed both consciously and subconsciously) to be a significant agent of the culture from which it came. In order for psychology to be meaningful in Latin America, it must be grounded in a political context, whereas traditional psychology is individualistic. Traditional psychology promulgates those in power by sanctifying what exists, where, in order to view cultural imperialism critically, one must be mindful of what should be changed.

Martin-Baró believed that cultural imperialism, as the psychological henchman of oppression, creates subtle absurdities, which the context of oppression causes the oppressed to accept as natural. An example is the myth of "the lazy Latino." In order to resist this influence, the psychologist has a radically different role: to facilitate critical consciousness. Through increasing critical consciousness of the world, one becomes aware of the myth that oppression and dehumanization are natural. An important result of the praxis of critical consciousness is the recovery of the history of the oppressed group. The invading culture strips the oppressed people from their traditions and identity as a worthy social entity. The recovery of the historicity of the oppressed facilitates decoding and deconstructing the mechanisms of oppression and dehumanization, giving the oppressed group direction for transforming oppressive structures.

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Online Resources

- BBC 4: In our time, broadcast on cultural imperialism. Introduction: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548h4>
- Globalization 101: <http://www.globalization101.org/>
- International forum on globalization: <http://www.ifg.org/>
- The new influencer : <http://www.newinfluencer.com/>
- Undercurrents: Videos for social justice: <http://www.undercurrents.org/>

Cultural Psychology

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Introduction and History

Cultural psychology is an umbrella term for a multifaceted undercurrent to the discipline's dominant individual-centric (one-person) and natural-scientific paradigm, an undercurrent that has been present in psychology since its inception, but whose origins and key questions can be traced much further back in time. Wilhelm Wundt's monumental ten volumes of *Völkerpsychologie* (Wundt, 1900–1920) can be regarded as the earliest

manifestation of a cultural perspective within the incipient discipline. Therein, Wundt tried to analyze and systematize “higher” psychological processes (e.g., language use, moral thinking, or rituals) by means of historical, ethnographic, and linguistic comparison – i.e., by cultural-scientific means. Wundt's account of a “historical developmental psychology of mankind” probably exaggerated the systematics and purposefulness of that development and also suffered from a Eurocentric, if not sometimes blunt nationalistic, bias. It is partly due to these shortfalls that his “second psychology” – as Michael Cole (1996) has called Wundt's cultural-psychological endeavors in contrast to his “first,” i.e., experimental-physiological approach – fell into oblivion for decades and has only recently been revisited (Jüttemann, 2006). At any rate, mainstream psychology could not be convinced to this day that such higher psychological processes should be accessible apart from natural-scientific means and methods (i.e., apart from experimental investigation, statistical quantification, and mathematical formalization).

Wundt's concept of *Völkerpsychologie* built upon some preliminary work by other scholars, the journal “*Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*,” launched in 1860 by Hermann (Hajm) Steinthal and Moritz Lazarus, promoted an interdisciplinary science of linguistic, history, philosophy, and psychology in order to understand the emergence of collective ideas and of collective psychological entities – of a “*Volksgeist*,” as it was called. Cole (1996) identifies further predecessors of Wundt's “second psychology” in the works of the nineteenth-century philosophers Wilhelm von Humboldt, Johann Gottfried Herder, as well as in Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) *scienza nuova* – a visionary outline of a historical science of man that would understand him as fundamentally a meaning-making being and had a deep influence on the German philosopher Dilthey, the founding father of modern hermeneutics (compare Berlin, 1976).

Another pivotal influence for contemporary cultural psychology lies in the works of Lev Vygotsky, Aleksandr Lurija, and Aleksej Leont'ev, known as the Russian school of

“cultural-historical psychology” (compare the corresponding entry in this volume). Their central argument is that human thinking, feeling, behavior, and experience unfold in a specific historical and social practical context from which it must not be isolated. An impressive experiential account of the enormous extent to which thinking and perceiving is mediated by specific socially prestructured practical experience can be found in Lurija’s report on his field experiments in Uzbekistan and Kirgizia in the early 1930s (Lurija, 1976).

For cultural-historical thinking, it is the systematic use and development of tools (including language) that mediates all human activity with nature and with each other; tools are condensations of cultural practice which, at any one time, provide individuals with the ability to experience and act in a manner that is “meaningful” in regard to their cultural circumstances. That meaning is not something apart from human activity points to the anti-idealistic, praxeological perspective that lies at the core of cultural-historical thinking. In many regards, cultural-historical thinking anticipates insights of what, since the 1960s, is known as media theory. In turn, media theory (e.g., the works of Havelock, 1982, 1986) has inspired contemporary cultural-psychological perspectives that emphasize the co-constitution of culture, subjectivity, and media (Slunecko & Hengl, 2007).

Definition and Theoretical Premises

“Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche” (Shweder, 1990, p. 1). As any scientific endeavor, it comes in a variety of shades. Despite this variety, some broadly shared meta-theoretical premises can be identified.

All psychological phenomena and structures are regarded as intrinsically dependent on cultural lifeworlds, both in regard to their practical and discursive dimensions. This dynamic and reciprocal *co-constitution of culture and psyche* is the pivotal premise of cultural psychology. Not only do *contents* of consciousness vary over time, but psychological structures, functions, and

processes themselves develop over time; forms of subjectivity are culturally soluble, so to say, and even the very idea of mind is a historical and cultural artifact (compare Taylor, 1989; Jaynes, 1976). In other words, cultural psychology holds that psychological phenomena are *historical* in nature, which means that they – unlike universal laws – have their particular trajectories and destinies within each culture. For example, an attitude as, e.g., independence or an emotion as, e.g., romantic love, that have been virtually unknown to a European of the early Middle Ages, may suddenly bloom in particular cultural and socioeconomic situations. To understand, document, and bring to awareness such rise and fall of psychological phenomena and psychology-related discourses pertains to the core interests of cultural psychology. In doing so, it understands all such phenomena as co-constitutively intertwined with the ecological, economic, and social operating of a given cultural system – and with the media that this system employs or hosts. In the words of Ratner (2012), culture and psychology (read: subjectivity, mentality) “are internally integrated and . . . interdependent. Psychology is . . . necessary and functional for constructing/maintaining culture; and it takes on the characteristics of the culture that it constructs.”

In essence, cultural psychology wants to understand the *meaning* of actions, expressions, cultural artifacts, written or drawn documents, etc. Meaning is a reference value that does not lie in the experienced object, but is *endowed by consciousness*. Moreover, meaning is always relational: something is being related to something else; in the simplest case, an actual experience is related to a prior experience and obtains its meaning from this relation. A (re)turn to meaning was part of the ambition of the so-called cognitive revolution in psychology during the 1950s and 1960s in its endeavor to overcome the mechanistic stimulus-reaction concept of behaviorist psychology. As Bruner (1990) convincingly argues, however, this revolution soon found itself turned into a reductionist approach. Instead of understanding the human mind in its creative and active capacity for meaning-making, mind became the kind of ahistorical information-

processing device as which it is now known to contemporary cognitive psychology.

As any scientific effort that revolves around meaning, cultural psychology is *interpretative* in nature, i.e., it wants to understand the orientations, practical and discursive rules, according to which people of certain times and places create their cultural web of meaning and act accordingly. Any *nomothetic* psychology, by contrast, strives for models and laws (*nomoi*) that apply everywhere and anytime and can only be acknowledged – and not created – by human beings. It is significant for mainstream nomothetic psychology that it tends to discredit alternatives without such universalistic knowledge claims as relativistic. Cultural psychology, on the contrary, subscribes to an epistemology according to which knowledge is inherently *positional* and *perspectival*, i.e., bound to the knower's particular location in space and time. That means there are multiple conceptions of the real and no transcendent means of ruling among them. These conceptions do not arise out of the blue, however, but are informed by a specific array of social, economic, ecological, and technical circumstances at any one time.

Cultural psychology does not understand itself as another of subdiscipline of psychology, i.e., the one that takes care of the cultural variations, but as an all-encompassing perspective that comprises psychology as a whole. Rather, cultural psychology represents a fundamental alternative to mainstream psychology in that it always keeps in mind its own embeddedness in the overall cultural situation. Culture is not something an observer can simply “step out” of by some methodological precautions but rather a pervasive and continuously developing symbolic “field of action” (Boesch, 1991, p. 29), which always encompasses the operating of science too.

Traditional Methodological Debates: Cultural Psychology versus Cross- Cultural Psychology

For the novice reader, cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology may look quite alike as

both are interested in other cultures. Nevertheless, it is crucial to distinguish cultural psychology from its nomothetic rival sibling, cross-cultural psychology. The former strongly tends to an “emic” viewpoint, wherein other cultures are interesting in that they may provide contrast relations to understand what is going on in *one's own* culture. Cross-cultural psychology, on the other hand, is concerned with the experimental investigation of performance differences of human thinking, perceiving, attitudes, etc., *across* cultures. Methodologically, it proceeds as if one could overview cultures from a god's eye perspective (“etic” view). In approaching other cultures, it does not question the universal validity of its own methodology and terminology. To put it more poignantly, cross-cultural psychology is obsessed by the “Platonic aim of characterizing the inherent central processing mechanisms of the mental life” (Shweder, 1990, p. 11), i.e., of a mental life that is conceived as universal. On this behalf, making sense of cultural differences results in a peculiar epistemic constellation or, rather, contortion: when cultural differences have to be accommodated within an overall universalistic frame, they must be placed at the very fringes of the system. In this manner, they implicitly propose a kind of cultural “noise” that surrounds a universal mental processing device, performing in different environments (Slunecko, 2008). This way, the obvious fact that people from other cultures are different is somehow accommodated in psychology yet remains at the periphery of its concern. Cultural psychology, on the contrary, puts culture at the very center of the discipline. Culture is not an intervening “variable” but rather the fundamental precondition of any human knowing and practice (cf. Vygotsky 1962, 1978), including all forms of scientific knowledge.

For the very most part, categories and variables employed in cross-cultural research stem from European-American templates. The simplest yet dominant research strategy here is to translate a Western questionnaire and present it to subjects, often to student populations, in another country. Such research typically yields assertions of differences between cultures.

When reviewing such research in regard to his own culture of origin, Sinha (1997), one of the most outspoken critics of the methodological shortfalls of cross-cultural psychology and at the same time one of the advocates of an indigenization of psychology, finds that they describe Indians as, e.g., more fatalistic, passive, authoritarian minded, indifferent to contradictions, or less morally mature than Westerners. Such descriptions remind him of colonial times but contribute little to understand the particular embeddedness – and meaning – of such qualities within the semantic web of Indian culture. Along the lines of such research strategy, thus, psychology remains in principle a monocultural endeavor, confined in the parameters of its own knowledge production, and yielding results that assert and reproduce hierarchy relations between cultures. In a cultural-psychological scenario, on the contrary, psychological attitudes are not understood this way; they are not like nails that can be hammered from one culture to another culture; rather, they are constructions from one particular (i.e., Western) indigenous psychology that necessarily will take on different connotations in other cultures, if they are transferable at all.

Cultural psychology is thus not favoring a scenario in which one particular indigenous psychology (i.e., the European-American), in a kind of hidden battle for human nature, gives – by way of methodological prescriptions and prescribed methods – a piece of its mind to all others. In contrast to what often follows from cross-cultural research and in contrast also to a certain tendency in Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie* and even in the writings of the cultural-historical school, contemporary cultural psychology also does not put different ways of thinking, behavior, emotional experience, etc., in hierarchical relations. It abstains from judgments on the moral or epistemic value of other systems of knowledge, emotion, etc. It is this very bracketing of knowledge claims that open up the space for understanding the genesis and dynamics of such systems of meaning, including one's own.

Practice Relevance for Research

It follows from the above that from a cultural-psychological perspective, collective phenomena are best studied in their natural "habitats." Therefore, cultural psychology generally dismisses experimental research in favor of studying everyday practices (Bruner, 1990), intentional worlds, schemes, or scripts (D' Andrade, 1984), which per se relate to collective processes of meaning-making and performance. Such collective processes and worlds of meaning can be explored in multiple manners that range from field observations to group discussions up to discourse analysis and to the analysis of cultural artifacts. As a genuinely interpretative endeavor, cultural psychology definitely has an inclination to qualitative methods (Ratner, Straub & Valsiner, 2001). In this regard, it borrows and advances research methods from neighboring disciplines such as sociology, linguistics, anthropology, ethnomethodology, or culture studies, and it explores psychological methods developed in other cultural contexts (Gergen, Gulerce, & Misra, 1996). The quest for (universalistic) cause-effect relationships is generally dismissed in favor of a hermeneutic perspective (Straub, 1999).

In a cultural-psychological perspective, there is no such thing as a context-free research environment. Rather, the psychological laboratory is seen as – highly artificial – construction that nonetheless carries strong cultural presuppositions – e.g., to isolate individuals from their contexts (see below) – and allows only a limited array of answers. These answers are strongly preempted by the research conditions of the laboratory and the built-in power structure and role pattern between the experimental "subject" and its "investigator" (Danziger, 1990).

Critical Debates and Future Directions

The research formats of mainstream psychology (including cross-cultural psychology) converge in the tacit assumption that the individual is its primary or even its only possible addressee.

Even if it approaches group or cultural phenomena, mainstream psychology's research strategies revolve around samples of individuals and aggregate the results obtained from individuals. But what if this very assumption of the individual as the basic unit of psychological analysis and research design is itself culturally flawed? What if this individuo-centric basic axiom – combined with its twin axiom of universalism – would be the least favorable starting point to access the constitutive role of culture for psychological phenomena? And what if this is not simply an error but a systemic contortion?

As cultural psychology holds that all psychological phenomena, all forms of subjectivity, and all scientific efforts are historical in nature and are intertwined with the ecological, economic, and social operating of a given culture (see theoretical premises), it questions mainstream psychology's pervasive habit to put the individual in the center of its epistemology. It rather holds that the individuo-centric format that dominates contemporary (folk) psychology must be constitutive of and epiphenomenal to the total cultural situation too. In other words, individualism is regarded as a form of a subjectivity that is compatible and sustains the current socioeconomic, gender, and power hegemony. To put it more poignantly, it is the subjective side of capitalism.

Cultural psychologists, thus, are inclined to decode discourses (compare the entry on discourse analysis) and research formats that implicitly (via methodology) or explicitly (via theory) propagate images of the human being as one who freely, rationally, and in isolation decides among alternatives for the sake of his or her own profit and happiness maximization as expressions of late-capitalist ideology. In essence, the suspicion boils down to the idea that this very isolation is the form capitalism takes in the realm of subjectivity; this is, so to say, the psychological prerequisite to instigate – isolated – individuals against each other. Cultural psychology is part of critical psychology insofar as it does not consent to or collaborate with such discourses. By contrast, cultural

psychology wants to understand the complex history and dynamics, along which this discourse of isolation and flexibilization has become the dominant cultural mindset; it wants to understand how such ideology has emerged as the assembly point of modern Western mentality, how it has stabilized, and how it has become that successful under specific economic and ecological circumstances; and it wants to understand whose interests it serves in today's world.

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Online Resources

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Cultural-Historical Psychology

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Introduction

From the 1920s onwards, a group of Russian psychologists, revolving around the intellectual “troika” of Lev Vygotsky, Alexandr Luria, and Aleksej Leont’ev, started to come up with a corpus of closely interwoven experiments, field investigations, and theoretical writings which later were to become the basis of the cultural-historical school. Although it was confronted with political resentments and suppression in the Soviet Union and the USA for

many decades, cultural-historical psychology still stands as one of the most consistent and inspiring approach in the field of psychology. It provides fruitful concepts and inspires new investigation methods in many different areas of the discipline, such as developmental psychology, social psychology, linguistics, cultural psychology, and critical psychology.

Definition

Even though its topics range from aesthetics to perception and neurology, and from developmental to culture studies, and though its methodology comprises experimental as well as qualitative and field research, the meta-theoretical consistency of the cultural-historical writings is very high. This is due to its unfaltering epistemic focus on the activity of human actors (an offspring of the cultural-historical school, essentially spawned by Leont’ev, is known as activity theory) and on processes.

Most fundamentally, the cultural-historical school knows that any activity is culturally pre-structured and that it is always embedded in a sociocultural field or sphere. Any human activity unfolds in a particular historical context, a particular life-world – and thus always refers to the activity of other humans and in particular to their artifacts. That activity is culturally pre-structured is true even in the case of a lone actor; also for such actor culture would be present and manifest in the language and tools he uses – in other words, in practices which he could have never come up with just by himself. To paraphrase Hegel, tools and language are objective culture; through them we are embedded or woven into a culture-specific matrix of which we can never escape.

It is typical for the cultural-historical school that it does not treat practical, social, and language intelligence and their respective development separately of each other (cf. Vygotsky & Luria, 1994), but rather emphasizes the function of language for the use of tools and, vice versa, the tool character of language. In other words, practice with the hard medium (tool) and with the

soft medium (language), which are dealt with independently of many developmental approaches, here do not leave each other alone; already in the infant, they find themselves in a kind of “dynamic co-constitution” (Slunecko, 2008). It is this unity in action of tool intelligence and symbolic activity which distinguishes contemporary man from animal where the use of tools is not combined with and is not strongly informed by symbolic activity. Probably this connection set in only at a relatively late point in the natural history of humanity (cf. Mithen, 1996), a question which Vygotsky does not explicitly raise.

When development of language intelligence is so closely conceptualized together with that of tool intelligence, it can no longer be understood in an idealistic frame according to which the mind is “negotiating” its development and results all for itself and performs this altogether in the symbolic medium (language). Vice versa, practical action is not independent from the symbolic and social realm – thus a purely materialistic perspective is disavowed as well: “the great genetic moment of all intellectual development, from which grew the purely human forms of practical and gnostic intellect, is realized in the unification of these two previously completely independent lines of development” (Vygotsky & Luria, 1994, p. 108). This complex mutual relatedness of gnostic (language) and practical intellect (or put differently, that signs have meaning for action) is the discovery of the human race, its “great genetic moment” which is to be relived in every infant.

Keywords

Cultural-historical psychology; Activity theory; Language; Tool; Media theory; Lev Vygotsky; Aleksandr Luria; Aleksej Leont’ev

History

The history of the cultural-historical movement is intimately tied to the fate of its three founders,

Vygotsky, Luria, and Leont’ev as well as to the political upheavals of the twentieth century. The heydays of cultural-historical psychology were quite short, which is in part due to the fact that Vygotsky, the figurehead of the group, died very early, in 1934, only at age 38. Shortly after that, the “pedology decree” of 1936 put an end to most non-Pavlovian psychology in Stalinist Russia, and the cultural-historical school there fell in disfavor for decades. Both Luria and Leont’ev had to change their research interests to less politically suspicious topics, such as sensory physiology or neurology, to keep their academic positions. In the USA of the McCarthy era, the prospects for the reception of a non-idealistic psychology with a Marxist odor to it were even worse. Due to these political circumstances, the cultural-historical school almost fell into oblivion in the middle of the twentieth century. It was only in the intellectual thaw period after Stalin’s death that it could be taken up again in Russia; in the 1960s, it also was discovered in the USA through authors like Bruner, Cole, Valsiner, or van der Veer, to name just a few, and its key texts were successively made available to the international readership, although the wish for a complete translated edition of the works of Vygotsky, Leont’ev, and Luria has not been fulfilled yet. In Germany, most reception took place in the vicinity of Holzkamp’s school of critical psychology (Holzkamp, 1985; cf. Markard, 2011; Teo, 1998) and was concentrated on Leont’ev’s work *Problems of the Development of the Mind* (1978, 1981).

Traditional Debates

Far from being a purely theoretical endeavor, the cultural-historical school was constantly oriented towards empirical research. This is particularly true for Vygotsky’s and Luria’s scrutinizing developmental studies that led them to the conclusion that the subjects’ individual history is intricately intertwined with his social history; it is also true for Luria and Leont’ev in the field of rehabilitation and neurology (a turn largely owed to the atrocities of the Second World War); it is

finally true for Luria's field experiments during his expeditions to Uzbekistan and Kirgisia in 1931/1932 (Luria, 1976) which can be regarded as one of the main roots of cultural psychology. Luria's field experiments are particularly convincing demonstrations to what enormous extent thinking and perceiving correspond to socially pre-structured practical experience. For example, Aristotle's style, syllogistic reasoning, or the categorization of objects under mutually exclusive rubrics (e.g., tools versus non-tools) was not accessible to many of the illiterate shepherds Luria was investigating, even if such categorization was strongly alluded to by the researchers.

The title that Michael Cole selected for his compilation of some of Vygotsky's seminal texts, *Mind in society* (1978), puts another key theorem of the cultural-historical school in a nutshell: Mind (read also subjectivity, memory, thinking, emotions, etc.) is never something apart from, above, or opposed to a society, but literally dwells in it. That is, it is dissolved in it, or floating in it, informed, and formatted by the given totality of historical circumstances, production conditions, media scape, ecology, gender relations, etc. From here, it is easy to guess the fundamental affinity of the cultural-historical school to what is known, since the 1960s, as media theory. To put Vygotsky's pivotal insight into a media-theoretical wording, as soon as we start employing a medium, the medium starts having company with us, too. To associate with a medium, be it a hammer or the "soft" symbolic medium of language, means to be put under its spell, to be formatted by it and by the culture that has provided it, respectively.

Culture not only provides tools like bow and arrow, or language, but also formats of social organization, especially regarding the division of labor. In Leont'ev's main work, *Problems of the Development of the Mind*, the author describes the sociocultural mediation of all human action in his famous example of the hunter and the beater. While the need (hunger) and the motive (gathering food) of the beater and the hunter are the same, their immediate actions are completely different: The beater, who scares off the prey away from himself, must have the

hunter's hidden presence in mind; otherwise, his action would not make sense. On the other hand, the hunter's ambush would also fail without the beater. The activity of each is attuned to that of the other. The aim of each single action is just a puzzle of the collective enterprise of hunting, which everyone involved must somehow have in mind to make it successful (without necessarily being able to perform all its parts).

The little narrative lays bare a baseline of cultural-historical thinking: Human action is not solely determined by individual drives, needs, or attitudes, but primarily is a result of social interaction. Learning, from this perspective, is not a one-way process of accommodation of behavior to the environment, but an adoption and internalization of collective knowledge; it is an adaption to an already man-made sphere. Every human being, therefore, is a representative of (some of) the accumulated knowledge and abilities of the society which he or she is born into, knowledge and abilities, the development of which is not properly understood on the basis of a purely individual "genetics." Non-dialectic psychological theorizing, basically individual centered as it is, tends to downplay or ignore the necessity of the human "other," even in such obvious field as learning. Mind here prefers to give birth to itself, as it should be in an idealistic universe. In a historical-dialectical universe, however, what Piaget describes as stages of child development is not a sign of the unfolding of an innate human "reason" or a Kantian "Verstand," but rather the result of internalizing a particular batch of cultural knowledge.

In *Thought and Language* (1962) Vygotsky criticizes Piaget's concept of developmental psychology (while quite endorsing his observations) on yet another issue: For Piaget, the child is socialized in the course of its development, whereas for Vygotsky sociality is the primordial, out of which the child is individualized in the course of its development. What if it makes more sense to say that culture acquires us (Bruner, 1993) and that culture abducts us, so to say, as children and never gives us back? What if our present concepts of subject or self are products of a historically and culturally mediated

practice, not transcendent, timeless, and innate entities? If cultural tools and language are impinging on us from our earliest days, there is no such thing like a natural (state of) man before the onset of (potentially bad) cultural influence. What if such thinking would only reflect the heritage of a Christian metaphysics (due to which human activity defiles an original beauty).

Critical Debates

When Luria, in analyzing these field experiments, refers to the capability of Aristotelian logical reasoning as something worth aspiring for, he is a child of his time – a time of unfaltering Soviet optimism in a seemingly unilinear progression of mankind towards a communist social order. Following postcolonial criticism on such a one-sided perspective, most proponents of critical psychology nowadays do not follow him in this regard, denying any kind of hierarchical order between different ways of human thinking and practice. However, critical psychology agrees with the cultural-historical school in that with each and every new competence, an old competence, an old form of being in the world, perishes; it also agrees with the cultural-historical school in that from different practices, from different worlds of tools and language, different human worlds of thinking, or perceiving unfold.

Given such disempowerment of contemporary common sense's (and mainstream psychology's) pivotal ideology of the primacy of the isolated individual, cultural-historical thinking is a natural ally for recent methodological approaches in language and discourse theory. Such alliance is completed as soon as one understands that such thinking (as that of the categorical primacy of the individual) has ideological function.

Along cultural-historical thinking, to understand forms of subjectivity (e.g., contemporary individualism) as cultural products does not imply that the subject is absolutely passive in regard to the discourses it is exposed to. But even more unlikely is the idealists' dream of a rational individual, which takes decisions in the brightest light of his or her "free" consciousness. At this

point, the specific epistemic focus of the cultural-historical school provides a kind of middle way: In activity, we see the power of discourse put to the test, only in activity it turns out how (far) one follows or resists particular discourse propositions. In activity all the cultural transmission is carried forward and transformed.

Practice Relevance

Due to its praxeological focus, cultural-historical thinking also avoids one of the major epistemic basic pitfalls of mainstream psychology, i.e., the kind of reification and individualization that leads mainstream psychology to its bogus research objects. On this level, cultural-historical thinking had a deep influence on German critical psychology as well as cultural psychology (Cole, 1996). Along cultural-historical lines, human thinking cannot be conceptualized merely as the result of an individual's "cognitive capability" and can neither be conceptualized as the "performance" of a monadic individual, but is something always and per se co-constituted and pre-structured by activity – and activity is to some degree always joint activity. To highlight such joint activity as the assembly point of human reality is a safeguard against the (for the critical psychologist's eye: detrimental) habit of mainstream psychology, especially in its clinical and diagnostic branches: to blame individuals for what can only be solved on the level of society.

Future Directions

That the cultural-historical school is not strongly visible as a psychological movement these days does not impair the vivid dissemination of its key insights into a variety of scientific areas and disciplines. Rather, the nonexistence of a cultural-historical orthodoxy invites unexpected affiliations and alliances: In his approach to critical discourse analysis, Jäger (2009), for example, connects Leont'ev's concept of subject formation through social preconditions with Foucault's concept of the subject as a product of discourses;

the anthropologist Tomasello (1999) fruitfully exploits Vygotsky's ideas for a cultural understanding of the genesis of human cognition; Vygotsky's insights also made their way into an interdisciplinary approach named "activity theory" (Engeström, Miettinen & Punamäki, 1999). Drawing on Luria's works, Goldberg (1990) envisions a neuropsychology beyond biological reductionism; the famous case studies of the neurologist Oliver Sacks also follow Luria's concept of a "romantic science" and his famous neuropathological-phenomenological case studies (Luria, 1987a, 1987b) – to name just a few examples of the inspiring versatility of cultural-historical thinking.

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Online Resources

- [Vygotsky in English: What Still Needs to Be Done](#) – A discussion about the fundamental problems concerning the translations of Vygotsky's papers.
- [Lev Vygotsky online archive](#)
- [A.N. Leontev online archive](#)
- [A.R Luria online archive](#)

Culture-Bound Disorders

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Introduction

The term culture-bound disorder refers to a pattern of symptoms (mental, physical, and/or relational) that is experienced by members of a specific cultural group and that is recognized as a disorder by members of those groups. Culture-bound disorders may involve somatic expressions (e.g., temporary loss of consciousness or involuntarily clenched teeth), cognitions (e.g., a belief that one's genitals are retracting into the body or a conviction that one has been abducted by extraterrestrial beings), or behaviors (e.g., extreme startle responses, coprophagia, or speaking in tongues). The terms culture-bound

syndrome, culture-specific disorder, and folk illness are also used to refer to such phenomena.

Culture-bound disorders occur throughout the parts world. Some examples are *amok*, *latah*, and *koro* (parts of Southeast Asia); semen loss or *dhat* (East India); brain fag (West Africa); *ataque de nervios* and *susto* (Latinos); falling out (US South and Caribbean); *pibloktoq* (Arctic and subarctic Inughuit societies); and *Zaar* possession states (Ethiopia and parts of North Africa).

Definition

The term culture-bound syndrome was first introduced into the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (hereinafter DSM, the official nosology of the American Psychiatric Association) in 1994, although the term is much older. The DSM defines culture-bound syndromes as follows:

...recurrent, locality-specific patterns of aberrant behavior and troubling experience that may or may not be linked to a particular *DSM-IV* diagnostic category. Many of these patterns are indigenously considered to be "illnesses," or at least afflictions, and most have local names.... Culture-bound syndromes are generally limited to specific societies or culture areas and are localized, folk, diagnostic categories that frame coherent meanings for certain repetitive, patterned, and troubling sets of experiences and observations. (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 898)

DSM-IV-TR also includes a list of such syndromes in an appendix.

Keywords

Psychiatric diagnosis; Transcultural psychiatry; Folk illness, culture; Folk illness

Traditional Debates

Traditional debates about culture-bound syndromes concerned the validity of the concept. Conventional psychiatrists argued that it was unnecessary to have a separate category for

these disorders because such conditions were nothing more than variants of disorders already defined by western psychiatry. For example, *koro* (a condition in which a man believes that his genitals are retracting into his body) could be diagnosed as a form of dysmorphophobia or an obsessive-compulsive disorder. *Pibloktoq* was a kind of a hysterical reaction. In contrast, culturally oriented psychiatrists, such as those who were part of the transcultural psychiatry movement, emphasized the defining role of culture. They argued that members of different cultural groups experience traumatic events differently, have a different range of anxieties and personal conflicts, and enact and communicate suffering in different ways.

Critical Debates

An important line of critical inquiry has investigated racist and colonial biases in early accounts of culture-bound syndromes. Colonial-era psychiatrists' accounts of the mental disorders found among colonized subjects often tacitly reaffirmed claims about the moral and intellectual inferiority of subjugated populations, claims by which colonizers justified their regimes of control. For example, colonized and racialized peoples were sometimes deemed as primitive, psychologically underdeveloped, childlike, or lower on the evolutionary scale than white Europeans (Fernando, 2003). Although such blatant racial and ethnic biases are uncommon today, it remains important to investigate biases that still inflect discussions of culture-specific disorders. For example, symptom presentations that are common in western high-income societies are regarded as standard or normative; other symptom presentations are regarded as anomalous. (Consider that the DSM's list of culture-bound syndromes does not contain any disorders that are identified as occurring among white European or North American groups).

Another critique concerns the privileged epistemological position often granted to western psychiatry in discussions of culture-specific disorders (Crozier, 2011; Obeyesekere, 1985). Such discussions typically draw a sharp distinction

between psychiatric knowledge of western high-income countries and the traditional or folk psychiatry of nonwestern societies. The former is presumed to be objective, scientific, and disengaged from social and cultural determination; the latter is presumed to be contaminated by culture and folk belief. Critical theorists have pointed out that, scientific or not, psychiatric knowledge does not stand outside culture. Ideas of normality and abnormality rest upon cultural norms, not scientific evidence. Moreover, the cultural ideas promulgated by psychiatry and other human sciences produce the disorders common to western high-income societies, just as ideas such as possession, ensorcelling, and the evil eye produce disorders common elsewhere. As the philosopher Ian Hacking (2006) has put it, the human sciences are an important “engine for making up people” in contemporary western societies (p. 23).

From the standpoint of cultural psychologists, cultural forces are at play in giving meaning to all human activity, including psychological distress. Psychological distress is always organized by shared interpretive schemas; means of ameliorating distress are always socially patterned. This raises the question of what might be gained if we were to think of all disorders, even those that might have neurobiological substrates, as culture specific.

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Culture-Fair Tests

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Introduction

Discrepancies in outcomes between racial and cultural groups have long been attained across a range of tests, though these results were not always assumed to reflect cultural bias. Early discrepancies in intelligence testing were treated as proof of White racial superiority, and in some cases, fraudulent research was produced to support those beliefs (Guthrie, 1997). The concept of culture-fair testing only gained prominence in the 1960s, as explicit beliefs of White racial supremacy and male superiority began to lose power as a result of the civil rights and feminist movements. Although feminist and racial minority scholars had long criticized the misapplication and misinterpretation of psychological and educational tests, the effort to identify and eliminate bias from tests is still ongoing.

Definition

According to Zurcher (1998), culture-fair testing, often referred to as “culture-free” or “unbiased” testing, is designed to provide scores that truly reflect the capacity or achievement of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, by utilizing content that is not necessarily more familiar to one cultural group than another. Concern about cultural bias is not limited to any particular type of test. Cultural bias can appear in all areas of testing and evaluation, including but not limited to intelligence tests, neuropsychological tests, educational achievement tests, personality tests, and self-report questionnaires (e.g., symptom checklists).

Keywords

Culture-fair test; culture-free test; testing; test bias; assessment; evaluation

Traditional Debate

Traditionally, the focus of culture-fair testing has been primarily on eliminating cultural bias in the content of tests. These efforts have tended to focus on eliminating stereotypical portrayals of people, culture-specific knowledge, reliance on verbal ability (except where it is explicitly a target of assessment), and educational level (except in educational achievement testing). One example is the Cattell culture-fair intelligence test, which has been designed to measure intelligence independent of cultural experience, verbal ability, or educational level (Kazdin, 2000).

Another alternative has been the use of group-specific norms in scoring tests. This approach recognizes that there is unknown or uncontrollable bias in tests and attempts to correct the effects of that bias after the test has been taken by applying group-specific norms (typically differentiated by race or ethnicity). While this approach is preferable to using the norms of a different group, there are several potential problems. Group-specific norms are not widely available, guidelines for applying these corrections are not clear, and test developers often do not publish norms for different groups so they must be obtained from secondary studies. This approach also neglects within-group differences that might have an impact on performance on a test, such as the degree of an individual's familiarity or identification with the dominant culture.

Despite these efforts to make tests fair, intelligence and achievement tests continue to show disparate results across racial and cultural groups, which has led to ongoing criticism that the results reflect social inequalities, rather than group or individual differences in traits or abilities.

Critical Debate

Although much of the discussion about culture-fair testing has been focused on intellectual and educational testing, all areas of testing are susceptible to cultural bias. To emphasize this point, some authors have noted that even basic neuropsychological tests that are often assumed to be universally applicable, such as the Mental Status Examination and Trail Making Test, are in fact heavily influenced by culture and language (Dugbartey, Townes, & Mahurin, 2000; Paniagua, 2001).

Paniagua (2005) has emphasized the need to move beyond a focus on just test content and states that a culture-free test must fulfill five validity criteria: the test items must be relevant for the culture of the person being tested (content equivalence), the meaning of each item must be the same across all cultures tested (semantic equivalence), the test must be comparable across cultures (technical equivalence), interpretation of the results must remain the same when compared with the norms across cultures (criterion equivalence), and the test must measure the same theoretical constructs across cultures (conceptual equivalence). No test has been identified as having met all of these criteria.

Sternberg (2004) posited that all tests of intelligence, even ones once thought to be "culture-free," such as tests of abstract reasoning, measure skills that are attained through the association and interaction of ability with the environment. He suggested that the recognition of main factors of human intelligence may reveal more about how abilities interact with cultural patterns of schooling and society than it does about innate abilities. In this view, it is not possible to create a culture-free test because measured performance always consists of an interaction between innate abilities and an individual's culture and social context. By extension, if no test is culture-free, then no test can fairly be applied across cultures unless all contributing cultural variables are accounted for and controlled. This is not feasible, as the list of variables is lengthy, covarying, and subject to

both group and individual differences (e.g., acculturation status, worldview, language, socioeconomic status, health factors, and stereotype threat; Valencia & Suzuki, 2001). Thus, it may be that the only culture-fair tests are those that are developed within a specific culture for use within that culture.

Another possibility is that tests can be made culturally fair by including a broader range of constructs that capture the strengths of different cultural groups, along with contextual information. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) is one example of this approach (Gardner, 1999). According to MI, people possess a range of relatively independent types of intelligence (e.g., linguistic, logical-mathematical, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic) and that a broader definition of intelligence and alternative assessment techniques that measure both abilities and contextual factors would increase recognition of the abilities of individuals from marginalized cultural groups. In this view, culture-fair testing would involve recognizing the differences in performance that result from the interaction of environment and ability, measuring and valuing a wider range of abilities, identifying contextual factors that affect measurement or current level of ability, and developing strategies to overcome contextual barriers that impede achievement.

In addition to the above criticisms, the testing process itself can result in discrepant results even when a test is otherwise culture fair. “High-stakes” testing situations, where the results will lead to important decisions or opportunities (e.g., college entrance exams), result in higher levels of anxiety for some individuals. These situations also pose the greatest risk of stereotype threat. Stereotype threat has been defined as the anxiety that is experienced when one’s performance on an ability test is related to negative stereotypes about one’s racial/ethnic group or gender (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The additional cognitive and affective demand of being confronted with an evaluative situation where a stereotype may be salient has been shown to negatively impact test performance. Additionally, members of the

dominant cultural group may be more familiar and comfortable with interpersonal or situational aspects of test protocols. For example, psychological evaluations typically depend on quick establishment of rapport and participant comfort with being asked to respond to a lengthy process of novel questions and tasks with an unfamiliar evaluator, usually a member of the dominant culture, in an unfamiliar setting.

The consequences of evaluation can be great. In testing can lay access to higher education, academic tracks, accommodation and remuneration for disability, child custody, and even freedom (as in forensic evaluation). Because the stakes are high, it is essential that the barriers to culture-fair testing be addressed as thoroughly as possible when testing must be conducted. However, the fact that it may be impossible to create culture-fair tests raises the question of whether it is ethical to rely so heavily upon normed testing and evaluation in making high-stakes decisions, particularly when those decisions are made without consent of the individual.

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Cyberbullying

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Introduction

To varying degrees, children and youth navigate online environments where they interact with peers. While these activities can positively influence children's and youth's lives, there are also negative aspects to their online life, such as extreme exclusions from communities to which children and youth belong. Cases of cyberbullying will often be intertwined with young people's face-to-face relations within educational settings, both emerging from and contributing to what is often called face-to-face bullying. A review of the literature indicates how the field of cyberbullying studies has grown out of an

established field of (what is referred to as) traditional bullying studies. Much of this published research is dominated by perspectives of developmental psychology and quantitative studies of measurement and prevalence and by the development of evidence-based intervention programs to prevent bullying. However, recently critical studies suggest that research needs to move beyond individualistic understandings of the phenomenon and point to that there is a need for genuine conceptualizations with a refined understanding of the phenomenon as social and cultural in which a number of forces are involved in the production and maintenance of the phenomenon (Kofoed & Ringrose, 2012; Kofoed & Søndergaard, 2009; Schott & Søndergaard 2013, in print).

Definition

"Cyberbullying" refers to the phenomenon of bullying practices in which social media such as social networking sites and mobiles phones are involved. Cyberbullying refers to virtually or technologically mediated social processes which produce exclusionary practices where certain subject positions are annulled and derived of intelligibility. These practices include the exchange of harsh, threatening, or abusive messages.

Keywords

Cyberbullying; social networking sites; mobile phones; virtual subjectification; digital media

Traditional Debates

Within the wider field of cyberbullying research, it is possible to identify a consensus on three core characteristics of cyberbullying, i.e., (1) anonymity, the possibility of hiding the identity of the sender and to blur the number of sender involved is another core characteristic. This is also referred

to as “disinhibition” (Shariff, 2008), where young people borrow each other’s phones, use each other’s profile, or the practice of sending messages collectively. (2) There is general agreement that the impossibility of escaping derogatory messages is crucial in understanding cyberbullying. There is no sanctuary, as Kowalski and Limber put it (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). (3) The potentially infinite audience can witness hurtful messages or images posted online (Shariff, 2008); these interactions can be witnessed by and commented on not only by close peers but also by “the whole world.”

Much research assumes that bullying involves a dyad between the person being bullied and the person who bullies or a triad between the person who experiences being bullied, the one who bullies, and bystanders. However, some researchers have observed that children can be both so called aggressors and targets of bullying (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002), and others point out how involvement in bullying is much more complex and how positions are less stable but rather must be understood as distributed (Kofoed & Søndergaard, 2009). The traditional debates within the field of cyberbullying have centered on discussions of such positions, as well as the degree to which it makes sense to adopt the traditional perceptions of personality traits when bullying practices are not experienced face-to-face, but mediated by technology.

Critical Debates

Some of the questions which arise from a more critical approach are, as follows: Is it productive to talk of intentionality in cases that are cybermediated? Does it make sense to talk of bystanders when harassment takes place on social networking sites and a number of unknown persons witness the messages posted online? What counts as repetition, that is, when does a negative online behavior become cyberbullying?

Another central discussion is *how* cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying.

The fact that this discussion is at the core of ongoing debates reflects the way studies of cyberbullying have grown from the body of literature on traditional bullying and the way these perspectives have limited the scene for how to conceptualize and theorize the field of cyberbullying. Despite the predominance of an individual-inspired approach, research on cyberbullying has also seen contributions which address cyberbullying as a complex and social phenomenon and question whether “cyberbullying” is really the appropriate term (boyd & Marwick, 2011). Others have advocated the need to contextualize the development of large-scale intervention programs (Cross & Barnes, 2013, in press).

Despite numerous discussions about definitions, and studies of cyberbullying measurement and prevalence, we still know little about the psychosocial aspects of cyberbullying. The field lacks theoretical and conceptual clarity. Recent research, however, suggests that knowledge needs to be more analytically sensitive to not only personality traits but also social, cultural, material, technological, historical, and affective aspects. Particularly, it is suggested that research needs to address the affectivity of it in order to push the conceptualizations of cyberconfigured relations further (Kofoed & Ringrose, 2012). Recently, there is also a growing body of literature arguing for the need to include youth perspectives to provide in-depth understandings of the phenomenon (Spears, et al., 2011).

The hitherto strong focus on personality traits and the abovementioned core characteristics of cyberbullying suggests that the definitions and understandings are implicitly read through an understanding of a particular subject position, namely, that of a vulnerable victim, and less often through a lens of an agential subject position. boyd and Marwick recently pointed out how the language of cyberbullying does not resonate with the experiences and perspectives of youth. Through a study of youth language, they find that American youth use a language of “drama” which – among other purposes – serves to distance them from the

rhetoric of perpetrator/victim. They do so, boyd and Marwick argue, in order to save face and maintain agency (boyd & Marwick, 2011). The issue of agency is thus another matter open for further scrutiny.

This outline indicates that the connections between online and offline processes of bullying are more complex than research might first have assumed. New critical research would well move into new territories of refined theorization of the field particularly taking issues of power, agency, positioning, and affectivity into careful consideration.

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Cybernetics

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Introduction

Cybernetics (from Greek *kybernetes*, the steersman) is a term coined by Norbert Wiener in his eponymous book from 1948. In the following decades, cybernetics' technological terminology of "information," "feedback loop," "noise," "input," and "output" (Wiener, 1961) spread across traditional disciplinary borders and spawned a cybernetic physiology and biology (Ashby, 1960), pedagogy (Heffron, 1995), sociology (McClelland & Fararo, 2006), politics (Beer, 1973), philosophy (Günther, 1957), and even art theory (Franke, 1977). Although the heydays of cybernetics lasted only until the late 1960s, and it never managed to consolidate into a distinctive academic discipline, it remained deeply influential on computer science, Artificial Intelligence, cognitive and information sciences, as well as system theory (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Luhmann, 1995).

Definition

"Cybernetics" refers to an interdisciplinary science of "control and communication in the animal and the machine," as Wiener's book was subtitled. Cybernetic thinking is rooted in a long tradition of western rationalism, mathematical formalism, and mechanism; more recent influences can be found in US American pragmatism and behaviorism. Its foundations were laid out in the 1940s: In 1943, the neurophysiologist Warren McCulloch and the logician Walter Pitts presented a model of the nervous system which

was entirely based on a binary logic (McCulloch & Pitts, 1943). According to it, the human brain is nothing but a logical machine whose operations may as well be performed by any other (electronic or biological) system capable of computing logical operations. This *ontological indifference between man, animal, and machine* is a core assumption of cybernetics and is also present in *Behaviour, Purpose and Teleology*, a seminal paper by Rosenblueth, Wiener, and Bigelow (1943). In here, the authors conceptualize a universal taxonomy of behavior which is strictly oriented towards the “examination of the output of the object and of the relations of this output to the input” (Rosenblueth, Wiener, & Bigelow 1943, p. 18). Ignoring the structure, particular organization, development, or history of any particular investigation object (be it a living or dead, a natural or built one), the cybernetic perspective knows no substantial difference between human or nonhuman behavior, but only different degrees of its (quantitatively measurable) complexity. In close vicinity to these ideas, Claude Shannon (1948) presented a strictly quantitative approach to information theory, dispelling all traditional questions of “context” or “meaning” of communication in favor of an exact formalization of noiseless signal transmission.

Running from 1946 to 1953, the *Macy Conferences*, held in New York and Princeton, may be considered as the pivotal point for the rapid evolvement of cybernetics in its early period (Pias, 2004) and its consequent influence on a whole array of disciplines. Scientists from various fields joined the group, including the mathematician John von Neumann, the psychiatrist Ross Ashby, the anthropologist Margaret Mead, and the sociologist Talcott Parsons.

For the development of postwar psychology and psychotherapy, the participation of Gregory Bateson, who became famous for his systemic, interactional view of the human mind (Bateson, 1972), may be most significant. In the early 1950s, Bateson and his colleagues John Weakland, William Fry, Don Jackson, and Jay Haley set up a seminar for psychiatrists in Palo Alto, California, with the objective of applying cybernetic knowledge to a new form of psychotherapy which would

later be called “systemic therapy.” The prominent “double-bind” theory of schizophrenia was formulated by Bateson and his colleagues, tracing the genesis of a schizophrenic disorder back to contradictory communication patterns in one’s childhood (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956). At the *Mental Research Institute* in Palo Alto, Paul Watzlawick, who had joined the group in the 1960s, began popularizing a psychological theory of communication based on a cybernetic perspective of informational “input,” “output,” and feedback loops (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967).

Besides the influence of cybernetics on systemic psychotherapy, there is another deep connection to postwar cognitive psychology. Cybernetic concepts were highly attractive for experimental psychologists because of their inherent promises of applicability (controlling is probably the highest goal in cybernetics), mathematical accuracy, and its alleged applicability to fields such as physiology or biology. Even more decisive for the import of cybernetic electro-technological terminology into psychology may be the possibility for psychologists to speak about “inner” states or processes in a manner compatible to the contemporary scientific state of the art, i.e., without referring to a metaphysical mental “substance” – a motive that had been propagated by radical behaviorism for nearly half a century. The most influential works of early cognitive psychology were based on cybernetic concepts and terminology (Miller, 1956; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960; Neisser, 1967), as Broadbent’s *Perception and Communication* illustrates:

“Computing machines operate on a binary basis, they have long-term and short-term stores; servo systems seek goals by negative feed-back. [...] This book has been intended to show that nervous systems are networks of the type shown [...] and of no other type.” (Broadbent, 1958, p. 304)

Keywords

Cybernetics; information theory; control; feed-back; Norbert Wiener; William Ross Ashby; Donald Broadbent; cognitive psychology; system therapy; technocracy

Critical Debates

Critiques of cybernetic theory and methodology were formulated from different perspectives from its very beginning. The aspiration of cybernetics to become a synthetic “universal science” and its disregard of the specificity of objects as different as a homeostat, a torpedo, or a human mind made it vulnerable to attacks from established disciplines with well-elaborated terminologies in their specific field. On a philosophical level, Richard Taylor criticized the cybernetic talk of “purpose” and “teleology” in nonliving beings as vague and misleading, because it may as well be applied to “such things as a falling stone, melting ice, and a revolving water wheel,” therefore making “purposeful behavior a ubiquitous phenomenon” (Taylor, 1950, p. 311–317).

Gregory Bateson’s and Paul Watzlawick’s generous application of cybernetic concepts to the field of psychology and psychotherapy was harshly criticized for being “inaccurate, wrong, or trivial” (Girgensohn-Marchand, 1992, p. 83) in its very basic assumptions and its rather metaphorical use of technological terminology in social contexts. Cybernetics’ complete disregard of the level of semantics in human communication, coupled with ignorance of the history, context, and origin of a “pathological” social interaction pattern in systemic therapy, was accused of being unjustified and politically reactionary (Schüle, 1977), because cybernetic concepts are inherently unable to understand human beings as fundamentally social and historical creatures (Dupuy, 2009; Wieser, 2011).

Moreover, the movement of cybernetics was from its very beginnings charged with supporting a technocratic ideology (Habermas, 1989), encouraging a centralistic order of society implicitly controlled by a few scientific experts or “governors” in a technological, machinelike manner. Unable to question its own role and function in society, cybernetics could never divert the suspicion of being inherently undemocratic, mainly due to its conceptualization of man and society as a “homeostatic machine” which may have to be “regulated” and kept “running.”

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Online Resources

American Society for Cybernetics

Norbert Wiener's Cybernetic Theory and Parental Control
by Maggie McGarry

The Cybernetics Society

Web Dictionary of Cybernetics